


**REGIONAL ISSUES IN  
POLISH POLITICS**

*Edited by*

**T. ZARYCKI and G. KOLANKIEWICZ**

**School of Slavonic and East European Studies  
University College London  
2003**



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London, 2003

SSEES Occasional Papers No. 60

ISBN: 0903425-71-8

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Printed by Q3 Print Project Management Ltd,  
Loughborough, Leics

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## Acknowledgements

The Annual Anglo-Polish Colloquium held at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies on 15–16 April 2002 was devoted to the “Regional Dimension of the Polish Political Scene”. As in previous years the organisers acknowledge the contribution of the FCO and the Foundation for Polish Science (FNP) for their support of the Polish Social Science Post-Doctoral Fellowship. The duties of the Fellow include the organisation of this Colloquium which in turn was generously supported by a Research Grant from the M B Grabowski Fund attached to the Chair in Sociology with special reference to Central and Eastern Europe and represented by Mr Ryszard Gabrielczyk. The support of the Polish Embassy in London and of HE Dr Stanisław Komorowski and Mrs Monika Ławacz for the Colloquium was, as always, highly appreciated. This volume of papers would not have been possible without the tireless energy and editorial input of Christine Fernandes and the assistance of Emma Camplejohn and Lowell Black to whom a special note of thanks is due.

Tomasz Zarycki, George Kolankiewicz.  
SSEES–UCL, London June 2003.





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## Introduction

### The Relevance of the Regional Dimension of Polish Politics — The Polish Referendum on EU Accession

George Kolankiewicz

After what some commentators have called one of the most important votes in Polish history, namely the referendum on EU accession held on 8–9 June 2003, an intriguing aspect of Polish political allegiances at once became apparent. Political spatial divisions whose dividing lines could be traced back centuries appeared to have acted as excellent indicators of the voting behaviour of the Polish electorate. Obviously political traditions, as well as infrastructural development can influence political sympathies, however, it is clear that voters are also prisoners of their location to a greater extent than they realised. Poland appears to be divided for voting purposes into six regions which include the Western Territories, the Prussian partition regions both east and west, Galicia to the south, the central basin of Warsaw and Łódź and the eastern “wall”. Surprisingly, it is the central basin of the old Russian partition which is the most anti-European, a fact only disguised by the presence of a large urban vote. Galicia, or the old Austrian partition, was most pro-European and indeed its democratic traditions still appear to be able to ensure a large turn-out.<sup>1</sup> The inhabitants of the western territories which came into Poland after the war and contain migrants from eastern Poland and indeed other areas which were built up by migrant populations, displayed the highest level of pro-EU voting behaviour. Their attitude to change and uncertainty appeared to be decisive, and this is exactly what EU accession implied. The areas which had given birth to Solidarity once again demonstrated their anti-traditionalism and boldness. The opponents of accession in the Basin and the east demonstrated high turnout coupled with social isolationism and a “no” vote. This group had its own success and will not disappear from the political scene for some time to come. The Lublin region, for example, recorded a 36.7% no vote with a 55.5% turnout and preferred to disregard the Church and its

traditional authorities and contributed to the 23% national vote against accession.<sup>2</sup> Of course, the absence of over 40% of the electorate in this most important of votes also pointed to the tasks ahead in overcoming the obstacles to active citizenship, the solutions to which lie in the development of local civic society.

This volume of papers did not require the outcome of the referendum in order to highlight not only the importance of regions per se but also their embeddedness in Polish political life. Tomasz Zarycki, the Polish Social Sciences Post-Doctoral Fellow at SSEES had come to the School in 2001-2002 with the express purpose of developing this line of argument. His paper when read in the context of the EU referendum outcome is testimony to the prescience and policy relevance of such scholarship. Indeed, as the Polish parliament debates the 13 electoral regions for the European elections of 2004, the questions of voting cleavages and historical associations will remain firmly in the political picture. This approach also questions the connectedness of local and central politics in transition Poland. With a government facing what appears to be terminal decline and over 75% of the population critical of its stewardship,<sup>3</sup> the fact that the Poles could still field such a large turnout and vote overwhelmingly for accession is evidence of the multi-layered nature of Polish politics, global, European, national and local.

Polish opposition MP, Jan Rokita's incisive address to the conference identified the emergence of a new section of the political class, namely regional politicians. They will grow in importance and build on their cultural capital which comes with understanding the rhythms of political life identified above. It is they who will cultivate a new localism which builds on the traditions of which the Polish electorate has itself only become aware once released into the freedom of the ballot box. However, they are also more global in outlook and oriented towards the development of their regional economies. With an eye to Brussels and an ear to their electorates, they will contribute to the democratic deficit which is exemplified in low electoral turnouts or in populist resurgence. These local, post-transition elites as one of our papers demonstrated, will be the object of future research.

Jerzy Regulski as an author of Poland's municipal governance especially that of the municipality or *gmina*, is concerned with the recentralisation away from the original ethos of local democracy. But the *gminas* are now well and truly under a full head of steam bringing with them their own assets and potentials so long submerged and in the process differentiating out the Polish political landscape. The missing middle or *powiat* re-introduced in the same reforms of 1998 will add to the capacities



of the 2000+ gminas making up for fragmentation where it hinders joint projects but not stifling local initiatives and the sense of accountability. That the political terrain is highly differentiated at the local level can be seen by the manner in which neighbouring municipalities which appear to have no overt differences (except for an historic fault line running between them) could still produce quite different EU referendum outcomes, the reasons for which are the stuff of research and rhetoric mentioned above.

It is to some of these key fault lines to which George Blazyca and his colleagues turned their attention, albeit ones with a much more recent historical provenance. See Poland – Can Regional Policy meet the challenge of Regional Problems? not included here but published in the “European Urban and Regional Studies” Journal. Those which divide the economic space of Poland, sectorally, urban/rural and geographic, also appear as intractable as the legacy of the partition and the impact of EU accession on eradicating or indeed, equalising out their effects can only be anticipated. As to the first and most obvious, the legacy of socialist imposed industrialisation hangs over the development of local communities towards modernity and nowhere more so than in the heavy industrial heartland of Upper Silesia. With far reaching severance and early retirement measures backed up by a social package to ease the cuts, miners and their communities were thrown very much onto their own resources. Although these differed between the recent incomers and those which had existed since the industrial revolution, all had to diversify their activities, to develop new values, and become more outward looking. In this context it is possible to question the generalisation over the absence of entrepreneurial activity in the mining regions of Silesia, since how else could it be possible to explain how the enormous shake out of employees from the mines and related activities, albeit with World Bank support, was absorbed with hardly a social protest? Likewise the highest proportion of those who voted for EU accession (84.5%) coupled with the second highest turnout (61.4%) came from Silesia which definitely points to an acceptance of the challenge of the market.

As to the second obstacle, there is little doubt that the urban/rural divide cast a considerable shadow over the accession campaign and its outcome. Taking the EU referendum vote again as an indicator, access to transport especially rail, to schools, proximity even to a small town all have an impact on the attitude to the EU and to change. However, it is not easy to read these attitudes simply from their rural nature since border proximity, east and west can and does play a crucial role, in some cases producing a pro-EU vote where least expected based on recent experience or the perception of future interests. Finally, the east-west divide is, as Blazyca

states, more “fuzzy” and will become more so as different towns and regions develop idiosyncratic means for making the most of the EU. This refers in particular to the social capital/civil society attributes of a town or village and the energy it channels.

David Dornisch deals with exactly this issue. In the second part of his paper he examines the tight interlock between cultural and historical legacies, social and institutional structures and their impact on economic performance. The types of legacies mentioned in the context of EU voting behaviour also translate into “particular institutional and social structures supportive of economic change”. Dornisch identifies 10 well endowed regions but asks the critical question of how the other less well endowed localities can engage in “bootstrapping” and shift their developmental trajectories. The building of social capital either through the mobilisation of internal resources of dynamic leadership, or the installation of deliberative associations and consortia of the active or through the input of foreign capital of whatever kind, all contributed to success stories where there was no reason to presume that they could happen. The role of external support, be it as a catalyst to the stimulation of local initiatives or indeed as a direct investor, was critical and cannot be over estimated. Path shifting as Dornisch calls it can rarely be prescribed since it is only the combination of localised capitals, combined with external engagement (which in turn performs a range of functions) that ultimately produces a largely unanticipated outcome. It points to the problem of generalising about whole regions when so much of what is contingent is occurring at the level of the municipality and contains many ecologies of projects i.e. problem solving local activities.

The Silesian case studies which run through the conference proceedings are purposely provided to highlight some of these problems of relating levels, identifying capitals, defining positive and negative trajectories and examining path shifts. An intriguing outcome of the Polish National Census of 2001 was that 173,200 individuals claimed Silesian national minority status alongside 152,900 seeing themselves as German. Although the latter do have special representation, the Sejm, the Silesian lobby is still to make itself felt. This sense of identity came despite the fact that the courts had refused the registration for a Silesian minority association claiming that they did not exist as a national minority. Minority status can mobilise local identities which in turn can contribute to path shifts. Other problems however concern the several hundred thousand Silesian Poles who emigrated between 1956 and 1984 and in the process were required to give up their Polish citizenship. There is evidence of an increasing interest in return amongst these emigrants and their families which could inject a variety of capitals into the local economy.



Szczepanski in the first of three pieces on the Silesian region continues the social capital theme and examines the impact of demographic structure and educational attainment on its development. The former is hindered by the high levels of infant mortality the latter by the high levels of functional illiteracy. At the same time, heavy industry restructuring has created a category of disconnected people, those who through severance, early retirement (especially amongst the 100,000 miners and steel workers as mentioned above but also amongst ex state farm peasants) or ill health will produce a specific form of transitional underclass. This example of new poverty sits alongside the old poverty inherited from the socialist system. However, Szczepanski points to a particular problem faced in the rush to develop the services sector in the massive region of Silesia, namely the ideological and symbolic battle to divest the meaning of services from its derogatory and low status connotations when contrasted to the myth of the working class led by its vanguard, the miners! In this he points to the need to alter the role of the family as the transmitter of occupational ideologies and ethoi and to ensure that modernisation ideas do not exceed the symbolic competence of their target audiences. The coalmine, inn, church and bed he quotes quite colourfully were the traditional posts of the Silesian canopy whose weave it will be difficult to unpick.

In the revolutions from above, the competences of local elites to address the chances offered by EU accession in May 2004 will be a major factor path shift. Concern has to be expressed in this context for the so-called regional deficit on EU matters identified by Hughes et al in their paper, which has a direct relevance to Rokita's opening views on regional elites. Katowice does appear to be better equipped than the other regions they studied in ECE and indeed the strong regional identity mentioned for Silesia could contribute to the greater engagement and indeed pro-EU voting in June 2003 and the more realistic assessment of the benefits of integration.

However, the core of the conference was to be found in the discussions around regionalised politics or the politicisation of regions. Sosnowska makes it clear that local politics is rather about Arendt's "space of necessity" than the realm of freedom and choice- one could say it is about public roads and local rates rather than parliamentary process and policy. However, to place what follows on the conference agenda, Sosnowska introduces certain key distinctions as they can be applied to Poland in the pre-EU stage of the transition. Granted Poland's peripheral status, it differs from other applications of the term through its simultaneous cultural affiliation with the West alongside its awareness of its failed "catch-up" and therefore some sense of inferiority. Modern Polish

ideologies are therefore shaped through their proximity to the West but also in response to this peripheral status. Sosnowska unpacks the generalisations about discourses and political cleavages inherited from Poland's past as periphery- the Western, the peripheral and the local. It is useful to deploy her distinction between acquiescent and rebellious, humiliated periphery in order to categorise the attitudes of political parties over the last decade. They can help to read the position in which Poland finds itself, in its dual track foreign policy, post accession, both within the EU and acquiescent to its responsibilities yet strongly connected to the USA through its involvement in the Iraq war and therefore rebellious towards the French-German axis. Similarly, at the Salonika summit on 19-20 June when the draft European Constitution was presented, Poland demanded a recognition of the Christian roots of Europe in the preamble- something clearly omitted from the draft as presented, being seen as discriminatory towards other faiths. In the presentation to the summit Leszek Miller, the ex-communist Polish premier, was backed by a hefty 60% of public opinion just weeks after the referendum.<sup>4</sup> A clear case of rebellious periphery after resounding acquiescence if ever there was one! In this sense Sosnowska is right, the post 1989 political scene and hence the code to understanding the Polish political continuum has been constructed *inter alia* around global political attitudes and this, it follows, permeates to the level of the local. For those following the statements made by voters in Polish villages who came out 80% against EU membership, a civilisational confusion is apparent but more importantly is comprehensible. It is to be understood in terms of Sosnowska's use of the distinction between "global capitalism" and "folk capitalism", foreign and uncontrollable capitalism versus domestic, manageable and indeed more corruptible capitalism. What will be the foci of global political attitudes after EU accession remains to be seen. New political formations are evolving, old ones such as the ruling SLD, face internal crises often not of their making but in response to these exogenous forces and a whole generation of new voters who so provided the bedrock of the EU accession referendum have to construct the political discourse of the twenty-first century. The regions with all of their historical baggage will be critical in this formulation.

Szczerbiak's erudite presentation of the Poland's parties and their electoral strategies is all the clearer when seen in this context. The accepted wisdom of bi-polarity based upon values as opposed to an emerging differentiation in terms of interests is confronted and found wanting. Attitudes towards the past (recent as well as distant) and moral cultural issues continue to matter. Personality and leader orientation tends to count more than previously as the 2001 general election campaign demonstrated.



However, moral-cultural concerns have to be seen within their global context as indeed do economic interests and political personalities. The debate around the EU Constitution preamble is an example of the confrontation between the politics of values and those of interests raised to the global level. It crosses existing party boundaries but is most strongly felt in areas such as the sub-Carpathian region which voted 70% for EU accession largely on the admonitions of the Church. Similarly, a preamble containing such references to European Christian values is rejected in only two of Poland's 16 regions, both in Western Poland which were amongst the most pro-EU. This particular issue around which the Poles have some allies will not be resolved until the autumn and then only by a unanimous acceptance by all the member states, current and post-May 2004. It is a harbinger of the manner in which local moral concerns can enter onto the global agenda thus shaping future Polish political attitudes.

Mirosława Grabowska takes the agenda one stage further through her interpretation of the Lipset-Rokkan theoretical frame. She selects out the Reformation and Counter-Reformation as event-processes, alongside the industrial revolution, national democratic revolutions and the imposition of communism contributing to the creation of the current political cleavages. Against this backdrop her analysis of emerging patterns of voting in pre as well as post-1989 indicates that although party institutionalisation on the right has not been as impressive as on the left where a significant "gravity field" has been created, nevertheless post-communist political cleavages in terms of these voting patterns persist. Importantly she then takes her analysis of political cleavages to the local level examining both the vertical integration of these parties as well as their horizontal ties and orientations. The left were pragmatic and inclusionary in the necessary alliances and coalitions they needed to strike up, the right avoided the left in such cooperation to its cost. The discourse and invective of the two sides was instructive especially as to the power of the political stereotype. The role of local party activists where party membership is low, is significant. Largely, male, middle-aged well educated and employed, the political biographies of these activists did however emphasise the political cleavage. As to the future, Grabowska believes in the unrealised potential of a right electorate and identifies a set of factors which will propel the right back onto the political scene, local as well as national. In turn it will serve to maintain the post-communist cleavage rather than create an alternative bi-polarity.

Paweł Świaniewicz's analysis of the role of party politics at the local level is supportive of this conclusion and instructive not least in that it indicates a politicisation, albeit not willingly on the part of the electorate,

of the local political scene. Despite the fact that local government reform in Poland was underpinned by an anti-party bias, summed up by the saying “a hole in the bridge is not political” nevertheless data on voting behaviour in successive local elections says something different. Even the 1994 elections which featured a form of “hidden partisanship” where only the well informed local voter knew the political affiliation and biography of their favoured candidate demonstrated an unsuccessful attempt at resisting this tendency. By 1998 the political labels were quite apparent and even in the small municipalities the “independent” label fooled no one — even if it was intended to! Despite this voters still believed that ideally local elections ought to be non-partisan but appeared to accept the inevitable when in the face of growing socio-economic problems, voters conceded that a strong presence for political parties in local politics was desirable. Alternatively, Swianiewicz argues it could be the declining role of NGOs and lower public activism which compelled citizens to look to more traditional party based politics to get things done. In point of fact the local electors were caught between the hammer of party activists representing first and foremost their own party and the anvil of politics being the preserve of a small coterie answerable only to themselves. Although overt clientelism appeared to be absent — something which could have fostered local politicisation — since there appeared to be little correlation between central investment grants divested to local municipalities and their political allegiance, the message was clear.

Returning to the theme of regional elites raised by Jan Rokita, Antoni Kukliński and Karol Olejniczak present a typology of Polish regional political elites, business elites and the academic elite. They provide a working hypothesis that high quality regional elites emerge where there is a strong sense of regional identity, quality being important for regional performance. The remainder of the paper provides an insight into how such research could be undertaken in the future. Staying on the theme of identity at its various levels McManus-Czubinska and her co-presenters reported on some salient research outcomes dealing with local and regional identity within the context of attitudes to local governance reforms carried within the four reforms package, alongside reforms of health, pensions and education. They found that at the Wojewodship level identity was stronger than class, party and Europe and only slightly weaker than religious and national identity. Such local identification grew with time and was related to local presence. It weakens, they note, when there has been an encounter with a corrupt officialdom and thus, to some extent, is an explicit measure of the quality as well as of the duration of the local experience. Referring back to the introductory remarks, local identity



is stronger in the ex-Austrian partition especially around Krakow for a range of reasons although it also declined with educational level. It is quite easy to imagine being identified with a place possessing all the charms of Krakow! In a range of responses which were well integrated into the discussion which their paper raised, support for local governance reforms of 1998 was not zero sum with distrust of the centre not necessarily producing pro local governance stances and vice versa. Distrust of both levels of government increases the opposition to the local governance reforms. Harking back to the Swianiewicz paper, there was greater trust in local councillors in villages than in cities despite the fact that discontent with local governance reform was slightly higher in these same villages. This could be reflected in the generalised suspicion towards all reforms in villages. Finally support for the least unpopular of recent reforms, namely that of local governance, did not reflect localist values as it did democratic values. Here especially it was attitudes to democratic practice rather than principles which were being gauged.

Such practice is related to the degree of political alienation and consequently levels of political participation in local politics and as mentioned, are particularly important for rural communities which feel the impact of disempowerment in the rush to modernity more than most parts of society. Pawel Starosta in presenting the outcome to a comparative study, *Local political alienation and participation: evidence from rural and small town communities in Bulgaria, Quebec, Poland and Russia*, but which is not included in this volume for rural communities which included Russia and Bulgaria as well as Quebec found a relatively low level of political alienation, appropriately defined, for Poland. He presented a set of hypotheses generated from a variety of theoretical positions which he coupled to a group of variables and used regression analyses to isolate the salient factors explaining political alienation. A few of the results are mentioned here. The most significant effect on the level of political alienation across all countries came from income and household facilities. A second group related to a respondents' assessment of the functioning of local political institutions. For Poland the level of education was most salient, followed by views on local institutions and then household facilities. Social stratification was the key variable to political alienation at the local level for rural communities allied to educational access — a fact not lost on Polish policy makers. Shifting his attention towards political participation Starosta identified involvement with voluntary sector associations as a key variable determining such participation alongside education and income. Taking these two sets of findings Starosta produced a 4x4 table for each of the countries and extracted of four types of participants — withdrawn (high

alienation low involvement), mobilised externally (high alienation and high involvement) contestant (low alienation and low involvement) and autonomous (low alienation and high participation). Poland, of the three transition countries, had fewest in the first category and most in the last although in all cases they diverged from the most positive model presented by Quebec with an overwhelming 75% in the last category.

Tomasz Zarycki's paper was both the scene setter and the summing up paper. It placed in context the big questions namely whether the study of the regional dimension of politics adds anything to our understanding of social life providing meaning which is lost at the macro national level. Given the wealth of research produced by Zarycki around the apparent stability of Poland's electoral geography linked as it is to the deep historical roots and largely immune to the evolution of parties, mergers, institutions etc. The axis of values (post- versus anti-communist) and the axis of interests (urban versus rural) mentioned above provide the most salient dimensions along which Poland's electoral geography lines up. For both of these the imprint of the nineteenth century partitions was clear and ensures that Zarycki continues to work to an agenda which accepts that "Polish politics is founded on very deep historical and structural differentiations which appear not to be influenced by the short term changes on the political scene. There appear to be some tectonic shifts in this mapping and the growth of a form of populism around groups such as Samoobrona is an example of a possible structural change. However, Zarycki brings in another factor namely peripheral resistance around a changing centre shifting from east to west in order to explain this novel addition to post-1989 Poland. The paper quite properly sums up the paradoxes which inform the study of the regionalisation of Polish political life.

The added value of the conference came from the mix of perspectives and intellectual projects albeit often based on quite similar axioms. It is hoped that this volume with a selection of the papers presented at the conference will provide a statement of the current status of scholarship in Polish regional politics as well as signal the future directions of research.

## Notes

- 1 Jacek Żakowski "Nowy rozbiór Polski" *Polityka* 21 June 2003
- 2 Paweł Spiewak "Prawdziwi Polacy" *Wprost* 22 June 2003.
- 3 "Rząd nie odzyska zaufania" *Rzeczpospolita* 18-19 June 2003.
- 4 Andrzej Stankiewicz "Chcemy wartości w konstytucji" *Rzeczpospolita* 20 June 2003.



## Continuity and Change in Polish policy after Regional Reform in 1989

Jan Rokita

*A member of the Polish Parliament*

For me, this is an opportunity to share with you some reflections on a specific blend of change and stability in the Polish political system, which was clearly visible in Poland's major regional reform of 1998/99. Let me first recall the political circumstances of this reform. It is quite important because they were totally uncharacteristic in launching major change in a democratic system and can show you how much the political processes in Poland can be different from those in the democratic countries of Western Europe.

First: regional reform appeared on the political agenda suddenly. No serious and deep debate — be it political or professional — preceded its appearance. Reform itself was executed in one decisive operation without any interim phases.

Second: reform was launched by a right-wing coalition and executed with a great deal of determination. Yet the coalition, which had won the elections only a year earlier, had not proposed regional reform in its electoral platform. What was more, most of its leaders were opposed to the reform or at least sceptical about it. In fact, the decision was imposed by Prime Minister Buzek, who himself was probably not fully aware of the consequences involved. In fact, the Prime Minister accepted a private project by a group of conservative and liberal politicians and experts. Let me proudly say that I, myself, was a member of the group.

The reform created 16 regions — in the Polish nomenclature *Voivodships* — with elected public authorities, whose names: *Sejmik* for the regional council and *Marszałek* for the head of the executive board clearly referred to the great historical tradition of Polish democracy of the nobility.

The reform brought about a fundamental change filling up a dangerously empty space in the Polish democratic system between 2,500

municipalities and the national Parliament. In a country with a population of 40 million such a gap resulted in a dramatic shortage of democracy, and dozens of administrative structures filling up this gap operated practically without any civic control.

To use language reminiscent of Tocqueville, regional reform has built solid intermediary institutions between a citizen and the state — with positive consequences, including the main one: stabilisation of the democratic order, invaluable in a country whose democracy is 12 years old.

In 1998 the first regional elections revealed two new and interesting phenomena in the Polish party system. First: in spite of great unifying efforts of the Polish Second Republic between the world wars, and the social revolution and great *gleichschaltung* of 50 years of communism, party dominations are of regional character and still reflect the historic geography of the borders of the three powers occupying Polish soil for the whole of the nineteenth century: Austria, Russia and Prussia.

Thus, the Catholic conservatism of the Hapsburgs — well remembered in the south of Poland — still results in the domination of Catholic and conservative parties in the area of their former rule. The Bismarckian etatism of the former Prussia fosters the present domination of the etatist left in the west and north of Poland. In some Polish regions, we see the beginnings of the Bavarian syndrome. Even serious discredit will not lead to an electoral defeat of the ruling party. It is a new — and probably permanent — trait of the Polish political system.

Additionally, regional political coalitions seldom, if ever, differ from the national ones. The marginalised *Unia Wolności* (Union of Freedom) was an exception. Even before it left the right-wing coalition at national level, the Union of Freedom entered some regional coalitions with the Left. Still, a great left-right regional coalition is unthinkable in any of the regions, even though such an alliance would bring much-needed stability when the political backup for the regional government is weak and faltering. The communist origins of the Polish Left make such coalitions impossible. Regionalism has not changed anything in this field.

Still, in the wake of the regional public authorities, a new subclass emerged within the Polish political class, as yet still not numerous. They are the people who do not identify themselves either with the already influential world of local government or with the national political scene. They call themselves regional politicians. The group is distinct in its pragmatic political orientation and even more in the direction of its interests. They focus on developmental mechanisms, especially as regards economy. They identify themselves with this small fraction of the mass of state operations which stimulates development. The structural policy of



the EU is of special interest for them, and they know it far better than Polish national politicians. They attempt to introduce in Poland a modern public-private partnership to launch big investments. They are innovative and rather sceptical as regards extended social functions of the state. With time — I believe — this group will influence the actual shape of the government in my country more and more.

Regions are new actors in the field of regional policy, and, in each voivodship you can find a group of people deeply absorbed in developmental issues. In effect, central government which used to determine the direction of national development at its discretion, had to come to terms with the existence of a real partner in this field. Such a partnership resulted in the formation of 16 voivodship contracts, binding both the central government and the voivodships, and quite precisely determining which endeavours in each voivodship would be financially supported by the central government in the years 2001–2002.

The very negotiations over contracts between voivodships and the central government are a milestone in the Polish political system. Up to now, all developmental decisions have been made according to the sector method and never according to the territorial method. The question was: what to do about — say — agriculture or fishery, and never: what to do about Mazovia or Silesia.

Along with the gradual change of the governing method — from the sector to the territorial — one can see also a distinct process of growth of influence of regional elites on the management of public affairs.

Still such changes do not go unopposed. The inertia of harmful governance mechanisms remains quite strong. Due to the lack of — the badly needed — reform of public finances, financially the regions are very weak. It is enough to say that their own share in financing contracts we have spoken about amounts to 2.2 percent, that is, less than 100 million Euro in the years 2001–2002 for all the 16 regions. Those numbers alone show how much the regional elites lack instruments to influence national policies.

Also, the manner of financing the operations of regions is instrumental in keeping them dependent on the centre. Fifty per cent of all their financial means are subsidies, which means that both their amount and their appropriation are determined by central government. Such a situation makes all the regions equally weak and obscures their real diversification.

Unfortunately, due to a politically motivated presidential veto, 16 regions were created instead of the proposed 12. The truth is that — speaking economically and socially there is no *raison d'être* for four of them. Maintaining equal dependence of the whole 16 on central

government makes the wealthier weaker and keeps the poorest alive. The present leftist government strengthens such policy, doing its best to limit the role of regions in appropriating the Structural Funds as much as possible. Regrettably, such an unwise policy finds support with the Brussels bureaucracy.

Still, regional reform gave birth to a new phenomenon: a political game between central government and the regions. The stakes are a say in the allocation of national and European financial means and also, the preponderance in determining the aims and organising public-private partnership in financing investments. At the moment, regional elites are a contestant decidedly weaker and discriminated against. Still, it does not have to be so in the future.

In such a game the centre and the regions have distinctly different aims. First, the centre is concerned mainly with the social functions of the state; for the regions, development is a primary goal. Central government spends 50 percent of all its expenditure on social goals and only 5 percent on development. Such is the logic of a poor welfare state.

Secondly, the centre wants to level differences, the regions, at least the strongest, want to enhance their own competitiveness. It is obvious that too powerful a tendency to equalise leads to inhibiting development. Let me simplify somewhat: in the Polish development strategy, the centre constitutes the stability component while the regions are the element of change.

Therefore, the game over political influence between the centre and the regions is not a simple rivalry concerning domination in the political system. It is also win-or-lose for the basic tendencies of the national policies: either social and conservative or — vice versa — innovative and developmental.

It is also worthwhile to bring to mind one more political novelty connected with the emergence of voivodships as actors of the regional policy. Namely, the new type of structural conflict between the region and local governments acting on its territory. Local governments often have at their disposal much bigger resources than regions do and they do not want their investments to be dependent on development strategies adopted by regions and contracts between central government and regions. Local governments would prefer to negotiate subsidies directly with the central government. One can say very well that the very existence of regional contracts is regarded by them as an obstacle.

What is more, local governments often look up to the central government as an ally against the region. And this has a big and — I believe — positive influence on the political system. The consequence is a decentralisation of



conflicts. The centre is no longer a sole addressee of all expectations and demands. And this favours political stabilisation and a healthy tendency to weaken the omnipotence of the central government inherited from the communist era. To put it simply: it supports the idea of a strong minimal state.

For some people in Poland, especially Polish nationalists, regional reform meant a threat to the Polish tradition of a unitary state. The right to proclaim generally binding laws was seen as dangerous but still more so the possibility of the international engagement of regions, including direct talks with the European Commission. To alleviate somewhat the fears, some restrictive regulations were introduced, especially a strict supervision over the international contacts of regions.

After four years the picture has changed. The fears turned out to be groundless and special regulations unnecessary. Broad economic contacts, the ability to attract foreign investments, of knowledge of how to lobby Brussels; are all seen today as assets. Four years of practical experience with Polish regions has also changed the perception of their place in Europe. The idea of introducing in the future European constitution — along with the Union and nation states — regions as the third level of competence allocation, would find much less opposition. The direction of the European process has not yet been decided. Still, regional reform helped to prepare Poles to think in terms of the future building of a federal European organism.

I have tried to show you the interwoven threads of stability and change in the Polish political system and their balance in our regional reform. The reform itself has not caused a revolution in the system. Sometimes one would like to say, regretfully, it has not caused a revolution. It is a particular pity that a faulty structure of public finances prevented a more decisive break with the sector method of governance. It is a pity that regional reform failed to create more pro-development trends in public expenditure. When I say: it is a pity I know also that the reform has started multiple healing processes in the political system and strengthened Polish democracy against possible upheavals. The balance is decidedly positive. I am proud to say that such a statement can be generalised to the whole 12 years of the newly regained Polish sovereignty. These 12 years are undoubtedly a success story and a success story that is worth studying.





# Regional Politics



## Regionalisation: A Failure or a Step toward a New System of Power?

Jerzy Regulski

Poland is undergoing a process of transformation from a communist regime to a democratic one. In my paper on “Building Local Democracy” presented to the SSEES conference a year ago, I made an attempt to identify the main characteristics of this very complicated and complex process. During the last year changes have moved the country forward but new issues have also emerged. Transformations entered into a critical phase which may decide upon the future evolution of the country and its governmental system. Regionalisation plays a particularly important role. It may become a great success in achieving the democratic model of the state in a not too distant future. But it may also be a failure, breaking the whole process.

Regions (województwo) with elected regional governments were established in 1999, within the second step of decentralisation reforms, together with district, (powiat) middle level of local governments. The first step was made in 1990, when municipalities got their democratic and autonomous status. Now in Poland three levels of local and regional governments with elected councils exist.

Representation of the central administration (wojewoda) exists at regional level. Its role, fixed by law, is to protect the interests of the state as a whole and to supervise the activities of regional and local authorities with respect to their legality. The Wojewoda, as head of the regional office of the state administration is responsible for all supervisory and inspection bodies (e.g. health inspection, environmental inspectors, etc.). Thus, at regional level two parallel authorities exist: one regional with an elected council, and the other — central, representing the state. The current management of regional economy is in the hands of the head of the regional government (marszałek).

Some services, which are the responsibility of the state, need to be represented at district (powiat) level, too. To avoid the development of

local branches of central administration, the local district government is charged with those tasks, and the head of the district executive body is responsible for state services. Even he is appointed by the local council. So, at district level, we have only one elected government, which also manages the state services under direct control of the Wojewoda.

The three levels system was developed gradually, and based on a very successful experience of the local government established in 1990. This establishment initiated great changes in a broad sector of public life. Decentralisation does not boil down to some modifications to legislative or institutional systems. This process is much broader and complex. Establishment of self-governing municipalities was followed by transformations that went far beyond the domain of administration. Transfer of a great part of national properties to local government was the first quasi-privatisation operation that overcame the state monopoly in this field and paved the way for the real estate market to emerge. Local non-governmental organisations, local newspapers and local radio stations were set up. Banks specialised in serving local budgets gradually developed. Many supportive institutions cooperating with municipalities were established. The development of the water supply, sewage system and other components of the infrastructure gave jobs to many people and improved living conditions, particularly in rural areas. Of course, not all of the above changes were direct effects of the rebuilding of the municipalities. But there is no doubt that if the municipalities had not been created, changes would have been much smaller. For nothing can replace the initiatives of local communities and the involvement of citizens. Development of local government became a great success.

Our experience shows, that the decentralisation process is not only a legislative or organisational act. It is a very complex process within which political fights for power play a very important role. Thus the whole period of transformation may be presented as a chain of tensions and conflicts.

Great social, political and economic systems never attain a stabilisation. They must evolve to exist and only contradictions trigger off the evolution. There is no need to make any changes if all participants accept the current situation — no stimulus for development emerges then. This principle applies also to the administrative and political systems, which reflect such factors as social consciousness and skills, traditions, behaviour patterns, economy, technologies available, the environment, geographical setting etc. All of them are subject to evolution, and for this reason the local government system must evolve, too. But evolution of individual factors has different paths and speed. As a result, some tensions between them emerge and a need for amendments becomes evident.



That is the case of Poland now. After a very successful period some negative issues are visible within the system. Public confidence in local elected bodies is decreasing and central bureaucracy is pressing for re-centralisation of several public functions and management of public funds. Although several problems are visible, it is not so easy to identify the reasons which caused them. Recently the Foundation for the Support of Local Democracy published a report on Success, Menaces and the Dilemma of Local Democracy, (on the occasion of its Jubilee when 500,000 people participated in the Foundation's training events). The report attempts to initiate a public debate on Polish Local Democracy and its future. I use it as a base for this paper.

Regionalisation is a step within the whole transformation process. This process is complex and needs many years, or even decades. Nothing can be changed at once. Each modification demands time. Thus, today's issues have their roots not only in current events, but results from the history and evolution of legal and administrative systems, as well as popular perception, culture and tradition. They have therefore, to be approached in a historical perspective, and that is why we have to keep in mind from where we started on our path towards democracy, and why I refer several times to some factors from our past.

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The concept of local government is based on an assumption that inhabitants of certain areas form a community capable of managing their own local affairs. So, local government may be efficient and successful only if such a community exists. If not, local government would not be the right solution. The legal models must be adequate to the development of a civic society.

It is hard to define public attitude towards local government in Poland. It is once again necessary to go back in time as it is history that determines largely contemporary mentality. The long absence of the Polish state and its sham existence in the past fifty years has given rise to anti-state attitudes in Polish society. Also, ideas of people's movements, developed by opposition groups in the seventies and eighties, were based on such attitudes. The local government reform in its earliest stage was also perceived as a weapon used against the state and its administration. This "anti-state" spirit moved for a long time in people's minds and still has an influence on the current state of spirit.

The development of local government was concurrent with transformations in other areas of life. Parliament adopted and amended an impressive numbers of laws. People had to get used to more and more

changes. The law and institutions changed, public mentality and habits evolved. At this point the following question arises: what was and what should be the relation between these processes? Without a doubt there is a relation between the law and people's mentality. The law creates a framework within which people are supposed to function. But in order to adjust themselves to this framework, people have to accept it. And in order to accept it, they first have to understand it and confirm that it makes sense.

It seems we may distinguish precisely these three stages: understanding, acceptance and compliance with the law. When people do not understand a new law, there is no point in debating on reform and reform itself is doomed to failure. People may understand the law, but it does not mean they will accept it. It may violate their habits or interests to a degree which will cause conscious rejection and boycotting by the public. Finally, people may accept the law, but various circumstances may prevent its application. These might be obstacles when compliance with the law would require excessive cost, or too much effort. These obstacles might also be habits or customs. Everybody accepts a law which defines certain speed limits for vehicles, but very few drivers actually observe it.

These comments are particularly important during a time of systemic transformations when many factors change simultaneously, including the law and public mentality. When legislative changes are too fast, they are not understood and accepted by the public. When they are made too slowly, they impede progress and cause frustration. People feel restrained in their need to act. Finding appropriate relations between the pace of transformations in various areas of life determines the success of reforms.

In the case of local government reforms, these relations varied in different periods of time. At the end of 1989 the pressure for changes clearly indicated public expectations had exceeded the pace of reforms. The restoration of gminas not only satisfied those expectations but also definitely surpassed them. Society needed several years to fill the new legislative framework with their activity. But as early as the mid-nineties, needs arose. Legislative regulations lagged behind. More and more pressure suggested the need for reforms. Again, the reforms carried out in 1989 came up to those expectations and even surpassed them once more. People will need a few years to benefit fully from these reforms and to learn how to use them. But just now public perception is lagging behind administrative changes.

It seems to me that the development of a civic society in Poland is slower than transformation in other fields of public life. But does it mean that economic and legal transformations are too fast? Such a conclusion would be wrong. Only enemies of progress call for halting transformation



as “people are not prepared to accept further change and broader democracy”. Society cannot learn democracy through reading books alone. It must be learnt also by doing. That means we have not to stop transformation but support building civic society by education in the broadest sense of the word.

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Any reform changes division of power between different institutions and group interests. Thus, the decentralisation process is a chain of conflicts. There are some who have gained an increase in power and others who have lost it. The latter usually do their best to diminish their losses during discussion on the content of reform and then during the implementation process. But even if implementation is completed, the fight for power continues. The losers are fighting to get back what they have lost. Nobody is ready to resign for nothing.

First years after a reform are crucial for its success, but also most difficult for reformers. In general the public is resistant to new changes. Any change usually meets public dissatisfaction as people do not know how to use new opportunities. Bureaucracy is also dissatisfied as it has to meet new challenges and adapt itself to new regulations. If a reform is really good there is positive appreciation usually after a few years, and even later if the reform gets well ahead of the level of people’s mentality.

Opponents use this period of resistance and dissatisfaction to halt or slow down the reforms. As a result, decentralisation is not a linear process. It resembles a curve with continual ups and downs. For every few steps forward, there are some back. This phenomenon is visible in Poland at the moment. After important decentralisation reforms in 1999, re-centralisation has now become visible.

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Under the communist regime public administration was understood as a tool of the Party making the politics. The preamble of the 1976 Constitution included a statement that the task of the State was the implantation of the “great ideas of socialism”. State administration was understood as an executive body. The working class and its party were supposed to be the leading force. They set policies. The slogan: “The Party rules, and the government manages”, reflected the existing conditions well. Administration was subordinated to politics.

The omnipotent party disappeared, but this model of subordination of administration still exists in people’s minds. Division between the sphere of local politics and public administration is not clear. It exists neither in legal

and institutional reality, nor in the public mind. Society is disoriented and unable to define clearly the role of political parties on the local scene and the limitation of their actions and responsibilities. On the other hand, parties do their best to enlarge their fields of influence and keep local administration under their control. They behave as if control over local resources is the prize to be captured in the elections. This pressure results in negative public reaction, as the predominant opinion exists that local councillors are representing the interest of their parties rather than the interests of local societies. In effect, public confidence in those elected is decreasing.

One may ask why the problem of the delimitation of politics and administration exists in Poland, when in West European countries the role of parties is well defined and nobody has any doubts about what it is. It seems to me that this issue is an element in the whole process of transformation and it must be approached in a historical context. In Western countries, local government has a history several centuries long. Common sense and understanding of local interests are the cornerstone of people's behaviour and thinking on public affairs. Political parties developed their current shape much later and they had to adapt to existing values and society's way of thinking.

The situation in Poland is quite opposite. Democratic organisation of society, including local democracy, was interrupted in its process of development. During the last half century people saw nothing but a powerful party controlling the whole of public life. Local democracy and government became new elements, as did legal, institutional and mental factors. They found their place in public life and understanding in people's minds. But that needs a whole revolution of the mentality. And it needs a long period of time. It is much easier to change the law than people's minds.

Currently we observe a very negative tendency of parties to increase their power and fields of direct intervention and control. In many cases, unskilled people are appointed to administrative positions due to their political affiliation or personal relationships. There are cases when individual applications are treated in an uneven way according to the social and political position of the applicant. Corruption is observed. Local officials attempt to gain some privileges or benefits for their parties or group of interest or for themselves, using their administrative power. Those negative phenomena are possible as parties open political umbrellas over heads of "friendly" officials making their activities non-transparent and outside any public control.

In this context we must not ignore the problem of local politicians' awareness. In the past their situation was clear: their careers were up to the mono-party. They were dependent on the party and subjected local



interests to those of the party. A new generation of politicians emerged during the local elections in 1990. Parties were weak at that time and the vast majority of new council members treated their work as a mission. Local interests were therefore more important to them. The political situation changed over time. On the one hand, national parties became stronger, on the other, interest in and support for local governments by local communities were not sufficient. Local politicians were clearly subordinating themselves to national parties which resulted in a clear increase of party influence on local governments and local policy. Also the increased importance of local governments supported party influence on local authorities. This is visible in parties' political platforms. While local problems went practically unnoticed in the first years, over time their significance increased and they became top priorities. Parties were more and more interested in those problems as an area of their activity. It both helped systemic reforms and subjected local authorities to the influence of parties and their programmes. The increasing party control over local authorities caused a threat to the very essence of local government. Consequently a danger emerged of losing the trust of society — the basic strength to which local authorities owed their success.

Many politicians on the national scene are also against decentralisation. Their knowledge of how to function in democratic and decentralised structures is very limited, as well as their experience in that field. Many of them thought it was easier to rule by orders than through negotiations with autonomous local bodies. Also many political parties, despite their official declarations, were not prepared to govern a decentralised state and hindered the transformation process. Limitation of the power of the central government means also limitation of the power of ruling parties. But the state may be restructured only by the ruling parties which hold a parliamentary majority. Thus, in the name of achieving strategic objectives, the ruling party would have to sacrifice its current interests. This line of action is obvious in stable systems where a party's success depends on its long-term strategy. But post-communist countries lack this stability. The political scene is changeable. Parties are undergoing reforms, they split, or merge. It is therefore hard to expect them to carry out a long-term policy if in many cases it is not clear if the existing party arrangement will last until the next election.

This lack of a strategic view was visible during the last electoral campaign when all parties concentrated their attention on current issues, and none presented a long-term view of the country and the governmental system.

The Polish state under communist rule was organised according to economic sectors. Departing from that model was not a simple task. The sectorial mentality still prevails in internal policy. Coalitions of parties which have ruled Poland in recent years simply divided individual sectors between them. Each partner strove to strengthen "their" respective ministries and was obviously against decentralisation which would reduce their power. In effect, the anti-reformers were in a privileged situation. Decentralisation policy may be determined by the Council of Ministers, only. But an individual minister, being a member of the Council is also the head of his own ministry. When he supports decentralisation within the Council of Ministers, he will also reduce his authority and scope of political influence as head of the ministry. This means he will act not only against his own interest, but also against the interest of officials who report to him and often also against the interest of his party. One needs a deep sense of mission and has to be resistant to all pressure to support decentralisation in such conditions.

As a result, the political mechanism was, and still is, negative for decentralisation.

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The above mentioned factors, undue parties' control over administration and bureaucracy's pressure for re-centralisation, created a real danger for local democracy and further transformation of the state system. The regional level of administration is not now in the focus of public interest, but, in my opinion, may be approached as a good example of current issues, crucial for the path of Polish transformation further. The recently established system of two parallel administrations was a new one for the Polish legislative system as well as for the Polish tradition and mentality. This concept is based on a principle of division of power and responsibilities, and mutual control of independent bodies. It is well understood in countries with a long democratic tradition. But the mentality of the current generation in Poland was formed under a totalitarian regime, where power was centralised according to the Leninist principle of the uniform state authority. Administration was organised in a hierarchical way. Each local body was subordinated to another on the higher level. Now, at each level, we have independent governments and at the regional level there are even two parallel bodies. Therefore the current system is not well understood by the general public.

The establishment of regional governments with elected councils produced even broader changes as a majority of the regions are ruled by parties in opposition to the parties ruling the country as whole.



Co-existence of regional authorities and regional representatives of the central government produce political conflicts and a fight for power. For each central government and for all interested in keeping centralised power, the political and administrative strength of wojewoda was of crucial importance. Stronger wojewoda means stronger control over regional and local governments.

Wojewodas were in a privileged position from the very beginning of reform implementation. Before the reform of 1998 there was no regional government and only a state administration existed, except for the municipality. Thus, all the preparatory works on implementation of the new administrative system were in the hands of wojewodas. They divided buildings, staff and all other tools between their own offices and the newly established regional ones. The state administration made all preparatory works on detailed regulations. It is obvious that wojewodas were more interested in keeping the best for themselves and to limit transfers to new regional bodies. This unequal start is reflected in the division of staff. The central administration offices on regional level employ three-four times more people than regional governments, even the latter are managing regional affairs.

The second issue emerged when new wojewodas were to be appointed. There were several possibilities for their recruitment. In France, prefects are professionals, members of the civil service, not affiliated to any political parties. They are dependent only on the Prime Minister and they represent the interests of the state and national policy of the current government. To avoid any influences of local politicians, a prefect changes department every second year. This model is the closest to the concept of the Polish regional reform of 1999. But already previous leftist governments decided in 1997, when the regional councils were not yet established, that the position of a wojewoda, as governmental representative should be acknowledged as a political one. A wojewoda has to leave his post with the change of cabinet. An argument was launched that as wojewoda has to implement the policy of the ruling party, he/she has to be affiliated to it. In any case, the prime minister would only appoint any friendly and obedient representative. This argument is disputable but the system was introduced in 1997 and then maintained. All wojewodas appointed by leftist governments were dismissed in 1998, and new ones, still politicians, appointed, but this time affiliated to the right-wing party.

The way in which wojewodas are recruited creates crucial problems. They are selected among the candidates presented by the regional elite of the ruling party. This method was initiated by Mr Buzek in 1999 and Mr Miller has followed suit. It is totally irrational and in full opposition to the

spirit of last reform. Several regions are governed by parties in opposition to parties of central government. In this case wojewoda is representing the regional minority as the opposition won the regional elections. It is evidently absurd, when the losing party in a region controls the ruling of the winning party. It is inevitable that such a wojewoda concentrates his efforts not on representing national interests but on the interests of the regional minority, having an eye on future elections and on making the rule of regional government more difficult.

The situation is no better in those regions governed by the party of prime minister. In this case, both wojewoda and regional government have the same affiliation. We observe two alternatives. One is when wojewoda is competing with marszalek (head of regional government) for political leadership in their own party. This personal competition results in several tensions and conflicts in administration. Each of them attempts to give evidence that he is a better leader than the other. The other alternative is when both are political friends. It is obviously impossible that the wojewoda execute his control over regional government in the right way.

In all of the above mentioned cases, the prime minister does not appoint any real representative in the region. All wojewodas are playing their own political games to a great extent independent of their role as representatives of national policy in the region. But central government and the ruling party are strongly interested in keeping this system. Powerful wojewodas, closely linked to local party organisations, serve as strong support to them, particularly when the wojewoda has the chance to interfere in local affairs and to limit the autonomy of regional elected governments. Thus, there is no chance to see changes in that field. In contrast, we may observe several moves to increase the administrative power of wojewodas over regional government. It is a sign of re-centralisation, as the wojewoda is part of the central administration.

Particularly dangerous is a tendency to increase the wojewoda's authority over the financial streams of support in local and regional governments. One of the crucial tasks of the municipal reform of 1990 was to eliminate wojewodas of any influence in local finance. In contrast to the previous system, it was decided at that time, that all subventions to local budgets would be transferred directly from the Ministry of Finance, without any interference from state regional administration. The wojewodas got back some authority in that respect, and several funds are now distributed to regional and local bodies according their discretion. The wojewodas real power is now well beyond that of supervision and control as fixed by law.



New issues emerge with Polish future EU membership. This will not change in general local governments' responsibilities, as the Polish local government system meets all democratic criteria. However, it will be necessary to adapt them to several new rules and in particular, the use of EU structural funds.

In Poland, local and regional governments are responsible for all public services as well as for economic and cultural development of their territory. Thus, a huge part of the EU funds have to be addressed just to them. But the EU funding is negotiated by the Commission with central government. And the central administration is not willing to resign an opportunity to increase its power. According to the current state of negotiations, only one fifth of those funds will be given to regional governments and about 80% will be spent on national infrastructure and on sectorial projects coordinated by individual ministries. Several of them are already establishing their own regional agencies to manage those projects separately from regional and local governments.

The way of distributing EU funds will serve to strengthen centralisation, even the EU is calling for decentralisation of administration in candidate countries. Regional and local governments will become clients to central administration, who will distribute financial assistance according to their own criteria

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Regionalisation in Poland is at a critical point. Some people raise the question that regionalisation reform was not a failure, as Poland and its society was not prepared. In my opinion the attempt was worthwhile. It is impossible to prepare society only by reading books. Society evolves only by meeting new challenges. It can only learn by doing. Of course, looking backward it is easy to see mistakes and later to criticise them. But an attempt at regionalisation was made and it was a good step forward. However, just now we are approaching a crucial moment when the future success or failure will be decided.

The results of confrontation between central and regional administration is crucial for further transformation of the country. And the current image is not very optimistic. The ruling parties are not interested in real decentralisation and strengthening of regional authorities. It is in their interest to keep power in the hands of central administration, including the *wojewodas*. There is a danger that regional governments will be so limited in their financial and administrative capacity, that their impact on public life and development will be marginal. It is difficult to foresee today if there will be sufficient determination by political leaders and public

support to change this trend and reorient it toward decentralisation. If that were the case, Poland would achieve important success in reforming the state. If not, the transformation process may be hampered, and Poland will remain a centralised country for the next decades.

## The Social Embeddedness of Polish Regional Development: Representative Institutions, Path Dependencies and Network Formation

David Dornisch

In recent work on economic organisation and governance, attention has been increasingly focused on the region as the nexus and motor for development, growth and innovation. Under conditions of intensifying globalisation national structures are bypassed by transnational capital and international institutions. This places more and more pressure on regional actors to develop greater capacities for negotiating with, accommodating and adapting to external forces.

In work on industrial districts (Sabel, 1989) the presence of trust-based social networks connecting diverse regional actors is viewed as necessary to support an internationally competitive industrial production base. Well-known cases seen to support this region-based developmental model are the Italian Third Italy (Trigilia, 1986), Toyota City, Silicon Valley (Saxenian, 1992), and Germany's Baden-Württemberg Federal Land (Herrigel, 1993). More recent work on regional innovation systems expands the industrial districts model to systematic consideration of many more regions varying along dimensions such as degree of centralisation, internal coherence, localism, service vs. production base, etc (Braczyk and Heidenreich, 1998). Like those writing on industrial districts, for these authors the presence of cohesive social structures supporting the tacit knowledge and mutual learning crucial for regional competitiveness receives analytic emphasis. The point that social resources and structures inhering in regions are at the basis of development and democracy has been most strongly — and controversially — made by Putnam (1993) in his comparative study of social capital in northern and southern Italy.

The regional question — in particular, the importance of regional social resources and mechanisms to development — has recently become salient in economic policy debates in post-socialist Poland. In mid-1998 an



encompassing self-government and public administration law was passed which ostensibly reflected the growing perception of the need for strong regions. This law fundamentally transformed Polish regions (or voivodships) by, first, consolidating the previous voivodships into 16 larger ones, and second, by introducing democratic mechanisms and strategic, policy-making competencies at the voivodship (regional) level where they had not formally existed previously.

This paper asks, "Do Polish regions possess the capacity to play a strong developmental role?" and provides some answers using existing research, as well as conclusions resulting from the author's ongoing field study of regional development. In line with the work noted above, emphasis is placed on an examination and evaluation of the institutional and social resources available to regions in supporting economic development. Not only the future of regions is considered, but also their recent past and present, in line with the premise that the social capital and institutional infrastructure developed in regions in previous years will be significant for the realisation of their new roles. In more theoretical terms, the effort is to determine how important embeddedness, in both its institutional (see Hollingsworth and Boyer, 1997) and social (see Granovetter, 1985) forms, is to regional development possibilities and in what ways it operates, both generally and with reference to particular Polish regions.

I begin with a consideration of the institutional organs representing regions in Poland: the *Voivodships* (the administrative organ, as opposed to the territory for which it is responsible) and, most recently under the reforms, the newly instituted *Sejmik Wojewódzki* (regional self-government). In the second part of the paper I move to a broader consideration of the social and institutional resources that regions have at their disposal; particular attention is placed on strong social and institutional differentiation across regions which observers have become more cognisant of in recent years. In the third part of the paper, I move from an emphasis on social structures and institutional endowments as structural variables, to local, endogenous processes of construction of social capital and institutional infrastructure within regions. I conclude with suggestions as to the prospects for the emergence of strong developmental regions within Poland.

## **I. Institutional Representatives of the Polish Regions**

### *a. The old guard institution: the Voivodship*

Until 1 January 1999, when implementation of the Polish Self-Government Law of 1998 was initiated, the sole institutional representative of regions was

the Voivodship (in Polish, *Urząd Wojewódzki*). Polish analysts are unanimous in their general evaluation of the Voivodship in its pre-1998 form: it was ineffective in stimulating and supporting the development of regional economy and society (Gilowska, Gorzelak, Jałowicki, and Sobczak, 1998; Gilowska and Misiąg, 1995; Patrzalek, 1992; Kołodziejewski, 1993). This ineffectiveness derived most fundamentally from the fact that the Voivodship was an institution inherited and continued post-1989 in almost unchanged form from the state socialist period. While important local self-government reforms were enacted and implemented in 1989 (the local government reforms of 1990 were the first fully free elections in post-socialist Poland), this did not encompass the Voivodships. As indicated in Table 1, Voivodships remained essentially agents of the central state apparatus, with the Voivod (the region's head) being not democratically elected, but instead appointed by the prime minister. They possessed no policy-making prerogatives, instead fulfilling the role of monitor of central governmental policies. All financial resources were allocated from the central budget, with the large majority of funds earmarked as subsidies for specific social services, giving the Voivodships little flexibility in meeting the needs of their specific regions. After 1989, the only changes made to these general principles were the transfer of some competencies previously belonging to Voivodships to local self-governments as part of the local government reforms of 1989.

**Table 1. Characteristics of Voivodship Administrative Offices, pre-1999**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Voivodship heads appointed by central government;</li> <li>2. Voivodship acts as agent of central government in the regions;</li> <li>3. Voivodships possess no independent budgets or sources of income; financial resources allocated from central budget as directed subsidies;</li> <li>4. Voivodships possess no formal regional policy-making function;</li> <li>5. Voivodships carry out specific administrative tasks in a number of spheres of social service delivery (hospitals, schools, etc.).</li> </ol> |
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There is no doubt that the possibilities of Voivodships in taking independent developmental initiative were politically and institutionally limited. To some extent, the hamstringing of Voivodships was intended by national-level politicians and actors in the post-socialist period, amongst whom the conviction predominated that the Voivodships were bastions of conservative political interests tied to the state socialist system.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, and this is something which has received limited political or analytical attention, Voivodships, using the limited resources available to them, have in some regions been, for good or for bad, the most active advocates for regional development and have, with varying degrees of effectiveness, actively influenced the economic trajectories of their regions.



Such efforts have been most visible in three old industrial regions characterised by extensive developmental problems: Katowice (Lower Silesia), Wałbrzych (Upper Silesia), and Łódź (central Poland). In all three cases agreements (each having a different form) were negotiated between Voivodship representatives and the central government, first, to increase the amount of funds provided by the Center for Regional Restructuring and, second, to provide Voivodships and other regional organs with extra-legal competencies for taking greater policy initiative locally. The general evaluation of these efforts has been negative, with most commentators suggesting that they have been dependent on central action, have after relatively short periods of months or years lost their institutional coherence, and have been largely ineffective in accelerating regional restructuring (Gorzelać, 1998; Kudłacz, 1995).

*b. Voivodship-initiated regional restructuring: the case of Łódź.*

The author's long-standing investigations<sup>2</sup> of such regional restructuring efforts in the Łódź region have suggested a more nuanced explanation: while the efforts to create autonomously and implement comprehensive regional restructuring policies have proven failures, more bounded resolutions and clarifications — in social institutions and in collective understandings — have emerged from them. Let us present the story as a way to illustrate this.

In early 1993 in the wake of a general strike announced by labour in Łódź, the government undertook negotiations with regional unions and the Voivodship. In opposition to previous strike waves in Łódź which had focussed on wage and social security issues, this time labour, in alliance with the Voivodship, demanded central support for a regional restructuring policy. The government agreed 1) to the creation of a special "Plenipotentiary to the Restructuring of the Łódź Region" and to appoint the Voivod to this position and 2) to the allotment of an unspecified amount of discretionary funds to support this policy effort.

Over the following half-year, there occurred in the Łódź region an attempt to realise the intentions of this agreement.<sup>3</sup> The Voivodship pursued a corporatist approach, organising a *Łódź Regional Council* composed of representatives of 26 local public and private agencies and associations as the organ for negotiating policy. The Council met periodically and eventually divided up into a set of four working groups in which recommendations in the following policy areas were developed: labour and social policy, industrial restructuring, the private sector, and infrastructure. Finally, a team of experts composed of two policy analysts from the Voivodship and two Łódź University economists using these recommendations and other data produced a document entitled "The Łódź Program for Regional Restructuring."

This document, once publicised in July, produced no coordinated effort to implement regional policy. Indeed, the document itself contained no clear plan or instructions for implementation, but was instead a more general analysis of a set of policy areas to which general suggestions for further action were added. In the weeks



and months following, the Regional Council “deactivated” with most of its participants shifting their attention back to their home organisations. The “Plenipotentiary” function filled by the Voivod ceased to be a relevant part of regional debates and restructuring efforts<sup>4</sup>.

After the summer of 1993 there was no follow-up effort to create a more specified regional policy for the region. The conclusion that this effort was a complete failure must be tempered, however, by an additional observation: while no comprehensive regional restructuring followed directly from the above episode of corporatist negotiation, a more indirect outcome in the form of a diverse set of more bounded associational and deliberative (Stark and Bruszt, 1998) initiatives emerged in subsequent years. Table 2 details the most significant of these.

**Table 2. Bounded Associational Initiatives in Łódź, post-1993**

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|----|--|
| 1. | the gradual expansion and strengthening of the Łódź Enterprise Incubator (Dziurdzik and Klimczak, 1999),   |
| 2. | the efficient implementation of the Phare-STRUDER programme by the Łódź Regional Development Agency (1994–96) (Kozak and Pyszkowski, 1999),      |
| 3. | the active unemployment assistance and enterprise monitoring policy of the voivodship’s Labor Office (Mik, 1994; Konecki and Kaczmarczuk, 1994), |
| 4. | the emergence of the Łódź city government as an initiator and organiser of public and private manufacturing and infrastructural investments.     |
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All of these efforts derived from the basic lesson taken from the 1993 policy effort by its participants that creation of an encompassing regional policy through region-wide negotiation was bound to fail under the conditions of 1990s Łódź. Instead, and as their subsequent actions demonstrated, more bounded initiatives incorporating a smaller set of actors and issues have greater chance to produce results. These efforts also reflected a fundamental characteristic of Łódź transformational politics: pluralism, reflected in the above-noted segmented initiatives, is more acceptable to social actors than binding corporatism, represented in the effort to create the Regional Council.

From the point of view of the Voivodship, the dissipation of the Plenipotentiary function was not the end of its efforts to influence regional restructuring. But, as in the above-mentioned associational initiatives, the Voivodship also took the lesson that a more bounded approach was needed. Since 1994, the Voivodship has pursued a strategy diametrically opposed to its earlier approach by focusing on the specific sphere of industrial enterprise monitoring and restructuring, rather than an encompassing, multi-sector approach. To do this it has made greater use of its internal organisational resources (as opposed to the external resources provided by

regional associations in the Regional Council stage), involving the building up of an internal unit within the Voivodship apparatus, the Enterprise Supervision and Property Transformation Department. The result has been the active attempt by the Voivodship to exercise its legally prescribed ownership function over state-owned enterprises on its territory through a number of activities: intensive data collection and monitoring of enterprises, enterprise management consulting, appointing of liquidators and enterprise commissars (*zarządy komisaryczne*), searching for and negotiations with strategic investors in regional industry, merger and splits of enterprises.

Ultimately, then, what lessons can we take regarding the Voivodship institutional function as it has operated in the Łódź case presented above?

First, at least at the regional level, corporatism as the institutional basis for restructuring tends to be a fiction. Regional organisational actors are in general oriented pluralistically, pursuing their own ends in their own organisational niches. Correspondingly, Voivodships have and will face continued difficulties in attempting to orchestrate (or “concertate,” see Streeck and Schmitter, 1985) collective solutions. More generally, Voivodships lack the institutional and financial resources to pursue comprehensive regional restructuring. This derives not only from internal organisational weakness but also from inability to hold together externally oriented deliberative efforts.<sup>5</sup>

Second, Voivodships have since 1994 shifted their focus to the narrower realm of industrial enterprise restructuring which, owing to the possibility of accessing a separate realm of law (specifically, the Law on State-Owned Enterprises), has proven a more pliable area of activity for them. The above-noted results from Łódź are also supported by fieldwork undertaken by Kamiński (1999) in the Dolnoslaskie (Lower Silesia/Wrocław) Voivodship. He notes increasing effectiveness of the Dolnoslaskie Voivodship’s Enterprise Monitoring Department in recent years, enabled by the generation of new practices and knowledge by its restructuring specialists.<sup>6</sup>

In conclusion, the claims of Voivodship inactivity and ineffectiveness made by the commentators cited above (see page 5) must be reconsidered in light of this evidence from Łódź and elsewhere. In at least some regions Voivodships have taken the initiative and been surprisingly, though limitedly, effective, at least in the industrial sphere. Moreover, this initiative has frequently been taken *despite* the limitations placed by the unreformed state socialist public administration law on Voivodships. In the Łódź case, for example, the first episode of Regional Council-based negotiation was solely a local creation. No precedent for the Regional Council existed in post-socialist Poland and, in fact, it represented an effort to create an



organisational basis for action outside the existing legal framework. In the second more successful period of industrial change efforts, the Voivodship made use of a legal resource — the Polish Law on State-Owned Enterprises — which was unconnected to public administration law. Further, the build-up of an internal Voivodship apparatus occurred prior to subsequent ministerial directives standardising Voivodship organisation in the industrial restructuring sphere on a national scale. In their effort to make broad generalisations about the functioning of Voivodships, Polish analysts have failed to undertake the detailed organisational analysis necessary to identify important processes occurring under the surface.

*c. New regional policy-making institutions: reformed Voivodships and the Sejmik Wojewódzki*

Under the recent self-government and public administration reforms, far-reaching changes in the character of institutions representing regions have been taking place in the last couple of years. First, the institutional character of Voivodships has been fundamentally transformed, as shown in the first column of Table 3. While Voivods themselves are still appointed by the government as its regional agent, it is now the case that the previous competencies they possessed in the areas of health, law and order, education, communal services, and regional planning have been eliminated or diminished. Instead, their primary area of activity is in the monitoring of *other* regional institutions and agencies (among them, those to which their competencies have been transferred<sup>7</sup> in an effort to create the administrative basis for real self-government in Poland). They also have acquired a second function in the area of regional policy and strategy. Involved here are 1) the development of an internal regional development department for the generation of Voivodship policy positions<sup>8</sup> and 2) the role of evaluator of the regional strategies developed by the newly created Sejmik Wojewódzki (i.e. regional self-government).

Table 3. Competencies and Traits of Representative Regional Institutions under Reform, post-1999

<i>Voivodship Administrative Office</i>	<i>Sejmik Wojewódzki</i> (Regional Self-Government)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● central appointment of Voivod head</li><li>● elimination of administrative functions</li><li>● intensification of supervisory role vis-a-vis local organs</li><li>● partial strategic role</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● democratically elected</li><li>● fragmented administrative functions</li><li>● dominant strategic role</li></ul>



The Sejmik Wojewódzki (regional self-government) is the second regional level institution created (or recreated) by the reforms. Under the law, as indicated in the second column of Table 3, it is recognised *de jure* as the organ responsible for fulfilling the regional strategy/policy-making function. While Voivodships also have a role in the strategy area, it is primarily as a monitor and supporter of the Sejmik's efforts, formally speaking. The Sejmik Wojewódzki, in opposition to the Voivodship, is a democratically elected body resembling in its operation the township council. A set of typically 25–30 representatives from different districts (powiaty) within the council debate and negotiate regional development policy. The head of the Sejmik is the Marshall (marszałek). The Sejmik's executive body (zarząd) of five members is elected by the full Sejmik and supports the leadership efforts of the Marshall. The Sejmik also typically possesses an apparatus of experts and support staff totalling 100–150 employees (at present), called the Urząd Marszałkowski, or the Marshall's administration.

We see then, in the creation of these representative regional institutions, a fundamental shift in their operational profiles, away from the execution of specific administrative tasks to the creation of a vaguely defined strategic role; this applies in different ways to both the incumbent Voivodships and the new regional self-governments (Sejmik Wojewódzki). However, with the introduction of the reforms at the start of 1999 a number of serious shortcomings and ambiguities have emerged in the fulfillment of this role by these institutions (Table 4).

**Table 4. Shortcomings of Implementation of Regional Reform, post-1999**

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| 1. Uncertainty as to Strategic Autonomy of Sejmik;         |
| 2. Intergovernmental Competency Tensions;                  |
| 3. Inadequate Financial Standing of Sejmik and Voivodship; |
| 4. Excessive Politicisation of Voivodship and Sejmik;      |
| 5. Waning Central Commitment to Decentralisation.          |
- 

Most immediately, the question of the competencies and the related question of intergovernmental relations between these two institutions have become salient. First, while the Sejmik is given the *de jure* regional policy-making function, its autonomy in pursuing this is unclear. Voivodships also are developing strategy functions within their apparatus at present (through the aforementioned Regional Development Departments) and it is unclear how their efforts will impinge on those of the Sejmik. Voivodships are supposed to play an evaluative role with respect to the Sejmik's policy proposals, but whether they will be able to force

modifications, or whether any modifications will have to be negotiated on more equitable terms is unclear.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the policies developed at the regional level (in whatever form) must be, in turn, under the law, affirmed by the central government. At present, however, no central organ — e.g. a ministry or agency — has been designated to fulfill this oversight role.<sup>10</sup> Beyond this ambiguity there is an even more salient question to be answered: to what extent will the central government be able to dictate changes in the policies generated at the regional level? Obviously, this has fundamental significance for the policy-making autonomy of regions.

Second, the question of financial resources for the operation of the regional institutions has become pressing. Under the law of 1998, the Sejmiki were to be financially self-supporting, receiving their income directly from a set of new region-level taxes. Under the state budgets for 1999 and 2000 that has not happened. Instead, the central government, as was the case before the reforms, redistributes tax income it receives to regions based on its perceptions of their need. In addition, complaints that the amount of money to be allocated to the regional institutions has been substantially reduced in the realisation of the budget are endemic.<sup>11</sup> At present, it appears that this problem will last at least through budgetary year 2000 as these issues of public finance have yet to be worked out at the centre.<sup>12</sup>

Third, a serious problem of politicisation of the regional institutions has become salient since the start of 1999. A general perception has arisen that the central government's appointment of Voivods and their deputies (in most Voivodships there are two) has been driven solely by political concerns, with little attention to the competency of these individuals in economic policy and development. On the other hand, the Sejmiki, given general ambiguity as to their function, have come to be viewed as a battleground for political influence and sinecures by representatives of the varying political parties found in them.<sup>13</sup> Severe problems of political conflict going beyond the functional tensions between Voivodships and Sejmiki are emerging. In a substantial number of regions, the Voivodship and Sejmik are in a political deadlock due to the prevalence of opposing political options in the one versus the other.<sup>14</sup> What is more, in addition to the shortcomings in "functional" decentralisation noted above, there is a real danger of the *political centralisation* of these new regional institutions as the dependence of appointments to them on party-based patronage affiliations (either through central government appointments or central party-driven electoral seatings) becomes increasingly evident.<sup>15</sup>

For institutional/legal, financial, and political reasons, the introduction of the self-government and public administration law at the start of 1999



has produced less decentralisation and autonomy for regions than was expected by most commentators. It remains to be seen, of course, to what extent the tendency to water down decentralisation/regionalisation<sup>16</sup> is reversed by ongoing developments. Two general points can be made.

First, in order for regions to become relevant as autonomous agents supporting economic development, non-governmental organisations and associations, private business, and local experts will have to be incorporated into regional policy deliberations and implementation efforts. Neither the Sejmiki nor the Voivodships possess the resources, competencies, or organisational apparatus to do this on their own (or even in tandem). This problem of regional cooperation and network-building is completely unregulated in the new law, however. Consequently, it can be expected that there will be high variations in the regional solutions (or non-solutions) derived. Second, despite the many shortcomings of the law and its implementation, a strong global pressure for developing better articulated regional institutions will persist: EU integration. In particular, in order for Poland to access the EU Structural Funds, as well as other EU-motivated funds, such as SAPARD (all primarily for local and regional development in, especially, rural locales), it must be in a position to demonstrate that its regional institutions are capable of accommodating and governing the funds.<sup>17</sup>

## **II. Structures of Social Capital and Patterns of Network-Building**

### *a. Differentiation in regional social capital and developmental trajectories*

The preceding concluding comments open up an issue that takes us beyond the coherence of regional institutions: the social capacity and capital possessed by regions for supporting economic restructuring and development. Given the likely persistence of ambiguity and weakness in the regional institutions, this question, one that has occupied analysts of regional economies elsewhere in the world for a decade (see Braczyk et al, 1998), becomes particularly salient. As noted in the previous paragraph, non-governmental actors drawn from civil society and business will be necessary to support the development of the representative regional institutions.

In recent years there has arisen a body of research that has demonstrated an unequivocal fact: Polish regions differ strongly in their developmental potentials and trajectories. There are strong path dependencies characterising Polish regions, characterised by tight



interlocks between cultural and historical legacies, ongoing social and institutional structures, and economic performance. In an intriguing historical analysis, Jałowiecki (1996) asks, What historical legacy from the Polish past most strongly influences the patterns of differentiation across its regions today? He concludes that the answer is not the nineteenth century division of present-day Polish territory into Russian, Prussian, and Austrian empires, but the sixteenth century division of Poland between east, south, and west. This division cuts Poland into three parts, a west separated from the rest by the Vistula, and then a northeast and southeast, separated by a presently imaginary border. It is along these boundaries that economic, social, and cultural differences are most in evidence across Polish regions.

Gorzelak (1998) moves the perspective from the distant Polish past to its present to divide Poland into a set of developmentally differentiated regions: high-growth, old industrial, and agricultural (Table 5). Here the primary historical legacy explaining present trajectories is the more recent interwar and state socialist past. The old industrial districts<sup>18</sup> promoted by the state socialist planners are now uniformly suffering from severe restructuring problems and the agricultural centres in which large state cooperative farms (Państwowe Gospodarstwa Rolne) were organised<sup>19</sup> have been plagued by decade-long collapse and underdevelopment. The urban high growth regions<sup>20</sup> are in the luxurious position of having inherited much more balanced economic structures from state socialism, in which heavy industry was promoted, but substantial space for the development of small business in the post-socialist period remained. The Western regions, earlier part of pre-war Germany, now owe their present relative successes to immediate proximity with that country.

Table 5. Typology of Regions under Transformation

		Post-socialist transformation	
		Positive	Negative
Position in the socialist economy	good	positive continuity (e.g. big urban agglomerations)	negative discontinuity (e.g. old industrial regions)
	bad	positive discontinuity (e.g. Western regions bordering Germany)	negative continuity (e.g. the rural "Eastern Wall")

Source: Gorzelak (1998).

There is no doubt that historical legacies play a critical role in determining the developmental patterns of Polish regions. But what is

particularly important from our point of view is the fact that these historical legacies translate into particular institutional and social structures supportive of economic change. In this, differentiation across regions, as has been shown in a number of recent national-level studies, is unequivocal. Hausner et al (1998) construct a set of composite indicators<sup>21</sup> measuring various aspects of institutional and social structures, on the one hand, and developmental characteristics, on the other, in each of the former 49 Polish voivodships. Using factor analysis, they find that the 10 “highly developed” voivodships<sup>22</sup> in the first factor group have consistently higher scores than the other two groups (“moderately well developed” and “underdeveloped”) for the institutional and organisational indicators.

The existence of developed social and institutional infrastructure is crucial to economic development for a number of concrete reasons. First, it provides the basis for production of the innovations necessary for international competitiveness. It thus enables the emergence of what have come to be called in recent years “regional innovation systems”: regional economies characterised by high skill levels and educational attainment, and putting these human resources to work in closely cooperating and mutually learning organisations and businesses (Braczyk et al, 1998). Hausner et al (1998) (see above; also see Markowski et al, 1998) suggest that their measures of institutional and organisational structure reflect a broadly construed “regional innovation potential.”<sup>23</sup> Perhaps more concretely, it is becoming clear that the 10 voivodships with the most developed social and institutional infrastructures have absorbed the majority of foreign investment in Poland (see Dziemianowicz, 1997; Markowski et al, 1998). Foreign investment in post-socialist Poland is in turn associated with high levels of innovation and the fastest rates of modernisation. Finally, the high levels of social capital (defined broadly) in these 10 voivodships translate into substantially higher rates of new business foundings. Well-functioning educational systems, social norms of individualism and legality, supportive family networks, and other institutional supports such as a set of strong regional banks provide the fertile soil in which entrepreneurship grows.

The above question of the social underpinnings of economic development has received more detailed, qualitative examination by Hausner, Kudłacz, and Szlachta (1997). In this companion study to the work described in the preceding paragraph, the concern is not with developing general measures of social and institutional infrastructure and with correlating them with economic performance, but with demonstrating how social networks directly influence development. To accomplish this



explicitly organisational analysis, Hausner and his colleagues narrow the scope to one macro-region of Poland, the southeastern *Małopolska* region. They survey local governments and Voivodships, varied business associations, development agencies and financial institutions and the most prominent economic enterprises in each of the eight voivodships. They then develop organisational profiles of the internal workings and primary external affiliations for each of the surveyed entities. As shown in Table 6, four types of regional (voivodship) network patterns or “ecologies” emerge:

**Table 6. Southeastern Poland Regional Ecologies**

<i>Ecology Type</i>	<i>Applicable Voivodships</i>	<i>Organisational Pattern</i>
1. <i>ATOMISTIC</i>	Krosno Przemyśl Tarnów	Organisations maintain strictly formal and statutory links, without engaging in real cooperation
2. <i>BIPOLAR</i>	Kielce Rzeszów Tarnobrzeg	Restructuring is organised around two centres, or poles, which have emerged within an atomised organisational environment
3. <i>HIERARCHIC</i>	Bielsko-Biała Nowy Sącz	Province (voivodship) capital is the dominating centre, cooperating with a couple (or more) smaller, regional centres
4. <i>NETWORK</i>	Kraków	Many different organisations are present, with tight network links between them

Source: Hausner, Kudłacz, and Szlachta (1997).

This meso-analysis clearly mirrors the results of the above-described macro-analyses of regional differentiation. Four categories of socially differentiated sub-regions correspond closely with the contrasting developmental trajectories specified in the macro-analysis (see above). Hausner et al’s *Małopolska* study, however, goes beyond national-level statistical analysis to deal more explicitly with the mechanisms by which social capital and institutional infrastructure produce economic outcomes. To date, however, Hausner et al (1997) is the only study that systematically elaborates this link.

*b. Beyond path dependencies: building social capital and institutional networks in regional Poland*

The work presented in the previous section undeniably advances our understanding of the social capacities and capitals underlying the strikingly different patterns of regional development in Poland. We now have



a clear understanding of the primary historical and social components affecting territorial development patterns. And, at least in the southeastern region, these can be mapped onto a differentiated picture of social and organisational networks.

Nevertheless, there exists an analytical shortcoming in this work (both in its macro- and meso-level forms): it leads inevitably to an underlying hypothesis of tight, historical, path-dependent lock-in. Only those regions (voivodships) fortunate enough to find themselves in a favourable historical position will possess the cooperative social networks which in turn produce economic development. There is no discussion of how regions that have inherited unfavourable social structures can shift out of their downward spiral onto a progressive developmental trajectory. Nor is there consideration of the possibility that a well-endowed region, perhaps one of the 10 Polish growth poles<sup>24</sup> could slip out of or fall back on its positive developmental trajectory. In this, the Polish authors fall into an analytical bind for which Putnam (1993) has been criticised in his work on social capital in northern and southern Italy — its overdeterminism (Portes, 1998).<sup>25</sup> Locke and Trigilia (1998) provide direct counterevidence to Putnam's argument by showing that the subregions/localities constituting both the Italian North and the Italian South are highly differentiated in terms of network structures and economic development.

This observation leads to a crucial question: How do localities confined to their own resources (and to what they can access externally) *build the social capital* necessary for economic restructuring and development? This question moves the analysis back one step in the analytical chain, from the effects of social structures on development to the active construction of the social structures.

Have actors in Polish regions been able to perform such localised bootstrapping?<sup>26</sup> It turns out, predominating views to the contrary, that collectivities of actors in places that should ostensibly fail have shown a surprising vitality to construct the social basis for their economic recovery. This is demonstrated in a number of intriguing studies.

The work of Gorzelak and his colleagues (1999) is the first of these. These researchers show that in a set of Polish localities, some located in the least developed regions of the country, local governments have autonomously activated both local resources and external support (e.g. foreign investment) to produce dynamic development. Gorzelak et al (1999) apportion full credit for these surprising turnarounds to individual self-government leaders who, through their dynamism, expertise, and charisma are able to affect changes beyond the abilities of their compatriots. While skilful leadership is undoubtedly crucial to understanding post-socialist

economic change, it is evident even from the accounts of these researchers that there are additional, indispensable stories to be told of the surrounding social context, including the failures and lessons occurring along the way, and the many allies and competitors who supported and challenged the leader.

Work that more explicitly considers the process of construction underlying the emergence of social capital appears in the publications of the Local Initiatives Program (see Drażkiewicz, Gęsicka, and Szczucki, 1995) undertaken by a team of regional experts under the support of the EU's Phare Program. This programme's underlying aim was the stimulation of partnership and cooperation in a set of 15 localities throughout Poland whose labour markets were especially hard hit by the reforms. The experts assigned to particular localities acted as advisors in the localities, promoting the creation of *deliberative associations* (Stark and Bruszt, 1998, ch. 4) bringing representatives of local business, labour, and self-government together. They found that in these ostensibly socially backward communities, social actors possessed a surprising ability to cooperate, to think strategically and systematically about their economic futures and to take concrete initiatives in line with the emerging strategies. An important fact observed by the experts was that most of these localities, even before participation in the *LIP*, had begun independently their own collective projects of economic reinvigoration. The experts thus acted primarily as catalysts of these efforts, focusing them and injecting them with small, though pinpointed infusions of capital.<sup>27</sup>

Because of the intensive demands on research resources made by such in-depth analysis of intra- and inter-organisational dynamics, its quantity is limited. Nevertheless, the above examples provide a strong complement to the earlier described macro- and meso-analyses of structures of social capital. At the same time, a number of reservations can be made with respect to this work. First, the above cases describe only a very limited number of the overall population of Polish localities. In addition to these isolated cases of dynamism and relative success, there are myriad others which have not been able to bootstrap themselves out of the stagnation which clearly pervades many localities.<sup>28</sup>

Second, the dynamic cases cited above were clearly aided by external forces. None of them were cases of pure localised bootstrapping. In some cases, help from the central government was essential; in others, foreign investment provided a crucial push; and in still others, external consultants provided needed focus and expertise. But, as analysts of social networks increasingly recognise (see esp. Grabher and Stark, 1997, as well as Burt, 1992 and Granovetter, 1973 for broader theoretical statements) the



diversification of resources contained within the network is crucial to its dynamism. External support did not dominate in the above cases, but instead invigorated and gave cohesion to organisational networks that remained predominantly local in character.

Third, the cases elaborated in this section do not describe the operation of whole regions, but of the localities, sectors, and networks within them. In no sense can we speak of the local initiatives described in Gorzelak (1998), Drażkiewicz et al (1995), and Woodward (1998) as encompassing a whole voivodship (even within their smaller, pre-1998 boundaries). In short, in the effort to identify examples of autonomous construction of social capital and path shifting, I have drifted to a different level of analysis. This was intentional, however, and also very telling, as it sets off one of the difficult problems characterising the whole regional analysis literature: it is very difficult to speak of a region as a monolithic, coherent entity unless it is done using broad indicators and generalisations (as in the above-discussed Hausner et al, 1998 and Markowski et al, 1998).<sup>29</sup> Even regions which are ostensibly industrial monocultures — e.g. the German *Ruhrgebiet* analysed by Grabher (1993) or the Łódź textile agglomeration which I examined (Dornisch, 1997) — are composites of many organising principles characterising their constituent localities, sectors and organisational networks.

### *c. The region as an ecology of projects*

The localities and networks considered in the previous section should be considered as only one of many more projects undertaken in much more diverse regional ecologies. One way of conceptualising this is to consider regional economies as *ecologies of projects*. Projects are the collective efforts sets of actors organise to deal with the mutual problems plaguing them. Projects are oftentimes developmental, proactive attempts at effecting change. But they can also be anti-developmental, conservative attempts to maintain an unproductive or exclusive structure. Regions contain many different projects, each of which is at a different stage of development and each of which is only limitedly related to the others, some in tension, some mutually supportive and some disconnected.

Considering regions in this way enables new insight into the developmental potentials of Polish regions. When we recognise that regions are ecologies of projects we become attuned to the possibility that there may exist unexpected sources of vitality in a region. Simultaneously, this recognition also allows us to confront these with the evident sources of stagnation. My study of Łódź (Dornisch, 1997, 1999) understands regional



analysis in this way (see footnote 12 for description). This work is an attempt to maintain attention on processes of construction of social capital characterising the individual locality analyses (Drażkiewicz, Gorzelak, Woodward) while simultaneously retaining the ecological view contained in Hausner et al's (1997) multi-locality, multi-network regional analysis.<sup>30</sup> I look in particular at the evolving patterns of cooperation and conflict underlying restructuring projects in three sectors of the Łódź regional economy:

- *regional policy* — the efforts of regional actors, particularly the Voivodship to fashion a comprehensive policy for regional development;
- *textiles* — the efforts of industrial representatives and specialists to negotiate restructuring programmes for individual and groups of textile enterprises;
- *industrial banking* — the efforts of actors within the dominant regional bank, responsible for financing Łódź industry, to restructure its debts and refocus investment activities.

The primary conclusion of this study in essence repeats the basic finding of the individual locality analyses, only extended to a larger territory: *autonomous recovery and development have become increasingly evident in Łódź, though in all early prognoses recovery and development were seen to be precluded by a series of negative structural legacies.*<sup>31</sup> At the heart of this recovery and development are the painstaking efforts of actors, both at the level of the individual sectors and in the region as a whole, to cobble together localised solutions to their joint problems.

The broadest evidence of this is the increasingly clear emergence in the last few years of a *regional monitoring system* for disposing of and investing in the region's industrial enterprises (see Dornisch, 1999, for a more detailed examination). The RMS is a loosely coupled, unplanned coordinating mechanism consisting of a set of umbrella organisations, including (primarily) the Voivodship's enterprise monitoring department and the regional bank's capital investment fund, as well as (secondarily) the regional treasury chamber, labour bureau, development agency, and Łódź city government. These organisations undertake frequent evaluations of industrial enterprise and perform varied legal and organisational operations on them.<sup>32</sup> Over time, enterprises "shift hands," moving from one (or a group) of these umbrella organisations, and the career of these shifts provides a clear trace of the enterprises' idiosyncratic restructuring paths.

As the institutional changes described above and the more general economic indicators for the region show,<sup>33</sup> the Łódź region has clearly shifted out of the anti-developmental path characterising it in the state socialist period. Viewing the region as an ecology of projects provides a means for understanding how such a surprising shift could occur. More generally, the ecological view of regions provides a way of avoiding falling into a view of path-dependent interlock by incorporating into the analysis the overlooked potentials and dangers not considered in the more macro-level studies.<sup>34</sup>

## Conclusion

This study has attempted to identify and evaluate the developmental capacities embedded in the social and institutional structures of Polish regions. Overviews of existing research on a number of topics were presented. These included: past and present contributions of the representative regional institutions (the Voivodships and Sejmiki Wojewódzkie) to regional development; the relationship of historical legacies to variations in regional economic development; mappings of regional development paths onto social structures; and the process of construction of new social capital/social networks in localities and regions.

Two main findings were derived concerning the past and present developmental capacities of Polish regions. First, despite the undeniable institutional, political and financial limitations characterising the Voivodship, the representative regional institution dominating until the end of 1998, it has played a useful restructuring/developmental role in at least some regions. More specifically, while they have been less successful in elaborating comprehensive regional economic policies, Voivodships have been effective as monitors of regional industrial enterprises, developing specialised departments that have contributed to the restructuring of significant numbers of enterprises. Second, despite the undeniable, strong path-dependencies conditioning regional economic development, Polish regions do not display tight historical lock-in. Substantial numbers of localities and, more importantly, regions have been able to break out of their putative negative trajectories onto more positive ones. Particularly useful in understanding how such path shifts can occur is the conceptualisation of regions as *ecologies of projects*. This enables incorporation into the analysis of the hidden potentials and dangers hidden in path-dependent analyses, with the consequence that unexpected progress and failures can be accommodated, thus supporting a more balanced view of regional development.



Finally, as a concluding exercise, we can risk a number of concluding suggestions as to the future of regional economic development in Poland. First, Voivodship administrations, despite the general scepticism as to their past performance, possess organisational and human resources which can potentially be useful as they attempt to develop new strategic and monitoring roles. Most evidently, the enterprise monitoring departments previously developed can be drawn upon not only to continue ongoing industrial restructuring efforts in the region but also to provide managerial and strategic expertise in other spheres such as investor negotiations, financial and strategic management, and private sector development. Moreover, many regions have behind them (as in the Łódź case) attempts at developing more encompassing regional policies. Though typically unsuccessful in the past, these experiences can be used to inform strategy-making efforts in and around the institutionally and geographically reconfigured Voivodships.

Second, the successful development and implementation of regional policies will depend not so much on the effectiveness of the representative institutions — the Voivodships and the Sejmiki — but on the incorporation of regional actors into the process. The representative institutions, for institutional, financial, and political reasons, are likely to remain relatively weak for a considerable time to come. The extent to which and the way in which regional actors are incorporated will determine the equitability of the policies, the effectiveness with which they are implemented, and, ultimately, the developmental paths taken by regions.

Third, the evidence, even from the more difficult cases, is that regions possess substantial social capital to support these developmental efforts. The trick will be to pinpoint this potential and to make effective use of it. No central organ or national law will be able to specify this, however. It will have to be worked out in the cooperation and conflict of actors as they pursue the many projects that make up the regional economy.

## Notes

- 1 Jałowiecki (1996) and his colleagues find, in a convincing set of analyses of political structures and public opinion in three old Polish voivodships, that many of the patronage-based patterns of influence have been continued in the post-socialist years. Because of weakly defined institutional-legal frameworks and regional party structures characterised by strong clientelistic relations, regional politics is dominated by a culture of under-the-table arrangements. The Polish word they use to describe this state, “*załatwianie*,” or “taking care of business,” is particularly telling, as it is a commonly-used



word transported from the state socialist period to indicate the typically informal, under-the-table manner in which most practical tasks got done during that period.

- 2 I have been engaged in in-depth field research in the Łódź region since the summer of 1992. I spent the 1993–94 academic year in Łódź as a Fulbright doctoral fellow and finished my dissertation based on that research in 1997 at Cornell University (see Dornisch, 1997). The focus of my efforts in Łódź has been on identifying the ways in which local and regional actors have actively renegotiated and redefined their social networks as a basis for recovery and growth. This research, which has involved a large number of structured, open-ended interviews in local institutions and enterprises as well as primary document collection and statistical analysis, has been extended through frequent interviewing trips between 1997 and 2000, when I was employed as assistant professor at the Central European University in Warsaw. Dornisch (1999) is an example of work completed on the basis of this more recent research.
- 3 It should be noted that, despite its national-level beginnings, this project as pursued in practice was not centralised. Some commentators have claimed that such corporatist efforts of creating regional policies lack a real localising component due to their dependence on central state largesse (Kudłacz, 1995). In the Łódź case, however, the situation was the opposite: central state actors made initial commitments of resources, extra-legal competencies, and political support that in practice were never carried out. Correspondingly, realisation of the initial agreement was solely dependent on the initiative of the regional actors in conditions of intense uncertainty as to the position of the central government regarding the endeavour.
- 4 The Voivod and the other actors who had been most integrally involved in this project (the Deputy Voivod and the members of the Steering Team) after the failure of this project became evident, attempted in a number of ways to defend the idea of collective action which had driven it (Grzegorzewski, 1993). The most frequently repeated argument was that the centre had not come forth with the resources required to support the effort. It may have been the case that this had a strong impact on the ultimate outcome of the effort. I would suggest, however, that it was a lack of regional social resources — or rather, the lack of ability to effectively mobilise in practice and through deliberation the available regional resources — which was the downfall of the project. While the regional actors had a preliminary idea for moving the project forward (the “Regional Council”) they did not have and never developed a clear conception for the operation of the Council, how its proposals were to be put into action, and how it would be embedded in the larger regional economic community.
- 5 Though note that in the Łódź case the negotiating solutions were not irrelevant. The “negative” learning produced there provided the conceptual stimulus to pursue more bounded, niche-based cooperative efforts. For a categorisation of types of learning in modern economies, see Cooke (1998). It should be recognised that the ability of a region to produce such diffuse learning is evidence of its possession of a sort of social capital based in cognition and culture (for a discussion of the cognitive and cultural bases of social action, see DiMaggio, 1997).

- 6 This is also supported by additional fieldwork which I undertook in the Poznań and Lublin regions in 1994 and 1999. In each of these regions over time Voivodships developed increasingly more articulated enterprise monitoring functions. At the same time, in structure and action they differed significantly from the Łódź Voivodship's enterprise monitoring function, due to differing sectoral, size, and performance characteristics of the state-owned enterprises in their portfolios.
- 7 These include: municipal self-governments, the powiaty (or counties, an intermediate organ between municipality and region), public, semi-public, and extra-governmental funds and foundations designed to administer public monies, health insurance organisations, and the newly created regional self-governments (or Sejmiki Wojewódzkie).
- 8 The 16 new Voivodships have retained their industrial enterprise restructuring units with the start of reform implementation. Indeed, the range of their activity has expanded as they have taken on the industrial monitoring obligations of the liquidated Voivodships. Thus, in Wrocław, for example, the number of enterprises for which the Voivodships fills the state ownership function increased from 57 at the end of 1998 to 179 at the start of 1999 (Kamiński, 1999).
- 9 Presently discussions of a draft *regional policy law* are under way in the Sejm.
- 10 Numerous concepts for the execution of this central regional policy role have been publicised recently. These include, splitting the present Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration into two ministries, Internal Affairs, on the one hand, and Administration, Housing, and Regional Policy, on the other; the creation of a separate Ministry of Regional Development to deal explicitly with regional policies and development; entrusting regional development (on a national level, a misnomer in itself) to the already existing Polish Agency of Regional Development which was set up in 1994 to administer the Phare-sponsored STRUDER programme of financial and investment support for regions suffering from problems of unemployment.
- 11 Grzegorz Gorzelak, a well-known expert on Polish regions and director of Warsaw University's EUROREG program, in a presentation at the Warsaw CASE Foundation citing work by Gilowska (1999) suggested that "20 złotych na osobę przynanych przez rząd centralny sejmikom wojewódzkim jest miarą polskiej decentralizacji" (20 zloties per person granted by the central government to the sejmiki is the most telling measure of Polish decentralisation) — the implication being that the central government has failed to follow up the rhetoric of decentralisation with meaningful downward transfers of resources.
- 12 In recent months, with the passage and implementation of the second wave of reforms under the AWS-UW coalition government (self-government, health care, retirement system, and education) considerable pressure for the passage of a law on public finances has emerged. Policy analysts and politicians, with the growing evidence of abuse and intergovernmental ambiguities, have increasingly come to feel that the proper implementation of the above four reforms is dependent on the existence of a transparent system of public finance.
- 13 In the Polish press there have appeared a whole series of articles bringing to light the rampant practices of the sejmiki members to award themselves what are viewed as excessive wages (these bodies have had control over the definition of their own wage levels). Academics, for their part, have emphasised the



threat to civil society that the domination of local and regional governments by centralised parties brings. The dominant Polish political parties have yet to develop decentralised structures in which local and regional politics and identities play an important role; instead, the model for party organisation and action in Poland appears to be one in which central debates and conflicts are by and large imprinted on local politics in unadulterated form (see Jałowicki, 1996).

- 14 The most notorious example is the Bydgoszcz-Toruń case in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodship, where the Voivodship and Sejmik organs have been placed in separate *cities* due to their strong, competing claims to regional preeminence (Gorzelak, 1999). An open conflict, derived in large part from diametrically opposed political traditions — Bydgoszcz traditionally recognised as a “red” city and Toruń traditionally affiliated with Solidarity — has developed between these two cities. Indeed, as Gorzelak (1998) demonstrates, there are stark differences between the two cities in their post-socialist voting patterns.
- 15 These politicising tendencies are in direct tension with the relatively recent passage (in 1997) of a civil service law by the Polish parliament. While it is hoped that this law will buffer regional (and other) institutions from excessive politicisation, it seems that the constituencies supporting the active development of a strong civil service at present in Polish politics are comparatively weak.
- 16 Such tendencies were evident in the very negotiation of the law itself, with a whole series of measures incorporated by central politicians originating, in particular, from the AWS and SLD parties, to do just that (Tucholska, 1999).
- 17 According to some commentators, there will be limited opportunity for cheating the EU, as their monitoring and bureaucratic procedures are very stringent (see Wedel, 1995). It should be noted, however, that the EU bureaucracy that has been constructed to maintain oversight of the disbursement and use of these monies has not always proven to be failsafe. In particular, cases of clear misuse of the structural funds in, for example, Greece and South Italy, have been registered in the past. As the EU expands eastward it will become an increasingly more pressing task to develop mechanisms to avoid such mishaps.
- 18 These include: the two coal-mining regions of Katowice (Upper Silesia) and Walbrzych (Lower Silesia), Łódź, and the Central Industrial District (COP) of southeastern Poland, whose construction was initiated in the interwar period, but then intensified by state socialist planners as a base for the country’s armaments and heavy industries. In reality the COP is not one concentrated agglomeration, as in the other cases, but a more dispersed collection of state-socialist company towns extending from the very southeastern corner of the country (the Rzeszów pre-1999 voivodship) to just south of Warsaw (the Puławy fertilizer plants).
- 19 These regions are, in particular, the north-central and northeast sections of the country.
- 20 The most successful of these now are Warsaw, Poznań, Kraków, Gdańsk, and Wrocław.
- 21 They draw on statistical and field data collected in a national level study of regional development.



- 22 These ten voivodships were: Bielsko-Biała, Gdańsk, Katowice, Kraków, Łódź, Opole, Poznań, Szczecin, Warsaw, Wrocław.
- 23 It should be noted that they do not examine innovation processes or outputs per se in regional economies. We do not, in contrast to the recent work on regional innovation systems contained in Braczyk et al (1998), get a clear picture of the processes by which innovation at the regional level is carried out. This would seem to be a very evident direction for subsequent research on Polish regional economies.
- 24 The Polish post-socialist recovery is primarily an urban phenomenon. As a leading Polish economic expert, Jacek Rostowski, stated in a personal communication, *all the growth has occurred in seven or eight cities*. Surazska's ranking of Polish gminas (townships) according to developmental levels supports this: the large majority of the 60 fast-developing townships are concentrated around the primary growth pole cities of Warsaw, Poznań, Wrocław, and Gdańsk. A majority are actually directly adjacent to these cities ranking (data provided at the "Local Democracy and Civil Society" conference of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, November 1999).
- 25 This is also a criticism that can be applied to the overwhelming majority of the work on industrial districts and the new regionalism, i.e. only socially well-endowed regions can become innovative industrial districts. In recent years, however, some others have become more attentive to the developmental question. Not only the possibility that regions can shift trajectories (or paths) has become an important question, but attention has also been drawn to how changing patterns of social cooperation and conflict explain such shifts. See the volume by Braczyk et al (1998) for an example; though also see Lovering (1999) for critique.
- 26 On the general idea of bootstrapping, see Sabel (1995).
- 27 Another, more recent study which supports the general conclusions of the LIP programme is Woodward (1999). It contains in-depth case study analyses of three private business support organisations: a business incubator in Łódź, a mutual loan guarantee fund in Biłgoraj (located in Lublin voivodship), and a revolving credit association in Kraków. The main message which emerges from this work is that, in the ostensibly atomised, conflicted population of Polish small businesses, underlying potential for mutual support and trust can provide the basis for intensified growth individually and collectively.
- 28 Though it should be recognised that the above cases do not exhaust the list of many more localities whose dynamism and recovery is less visible due to the simple fact of not being included in the cited studies/programmes. For general evidence of these, see Gilowska and Misiąg (1995) on the effectiveness of investment activities undertaken by local governments in the first half decade of post-socialist reforms.
- 29 Hausner et al's (1997) attempt to undertake an organisational analysis, not simply of one (former) voivodship, but of a whole macro-region constituting eight voivodships, is in this sense a more ambitious analytical project than the work cited in this section. This does not, however, negate the earlier-mentioned shortcoming of the Hausner et al work: the fact that it contains no "moving parts," no real social action.

- 30 My analysis is still not as spatially encompassing as Hausner et al's, as it considers primarily projects going on within only one (former) voivodship, in opposition to the eight examined there.
- 31 These included: an outmoded, inertial textile-based industrial monoculture, an impoverished populace at odds with itself over the few good available jobs, highly conflicted regional political parties, and a crumbling social and communal infrastructure in need of hundreds of millions of dollars of investment.
- 32 These include, for example, financial analyses, liquidations, appointment of emergency restructuring "commissars," property transfers, mergers, and splits, injections of investment, share, or trade capital, provision of start-up and venture capital, tax payment rescheduling and forgiveness, employment reduction planning and negotiation with foreign investors on behalf of enterprises.
- 33 The following table illustrates some of the basic trends in the region. Particularly evident are 1) the reduction of the unemployment rate to a level at slightly above the national rate, 2) the stabilisation of industrial production at about 2/3 of its late state socialist level, and 3) the explosive growth of the retail sector in the region:

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Unemployment (%)	8.5	10.7	16.4	18.9	19.5	19.1	16.2	10.9
Industrial Production (1987=100%)	62	50	50	55	61	63	65	67
Retail Sales (mln zloties)	1014	1607	2083	4642	6597	7687	9064	10478

Sources: 1) Various volumes of "Rocznik Statystyczny Województwa Łódzkiego." (Statistical Yearbook of the Łódź Voivodship) Łódź: Wojewódzki Urząd Statystyczny; 2) Various volumes of "Informacja o Sytuacji Społeczno-Gospodarczej w Województwie Łódzkim." (Information on the Socio-Economic Situation in the Łódź Voivodship) Łódź: Biuro Programów Regionalnych, Urząd Wojewódzki.

- 34 Such a view allows us to understand the seemingly contradictory claims of authors concerning specific regions. One example from Poland is the case of Katowice where, on the one hand, we have authors like Górzyński (1999) who claim that the region's post-socialist development has been stifled by the inability of the coal mining industry to downsize, thus blocking possibilities for development of the private sector. On the other hand, authors such as Węclawowicz (1998) have placed Katowice in the same category of regions as Poznań, Warsaw, and Kraków as the most advanced in their post-socialist transition (also see Pyszkowski's [1998] similar comment for the Wałbrzych coal-mining region). A view of the Katowice region as an ecology of projects enables us to understand how it can be that a region can experience dynamic growth through entrepreneurship, while at the same time, suffer seriously from the developmental imbalances going along with the overwhelming presence of an outmoded, inertial traditional industry.

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# A Silesian Case Study





## The Silesian Voivodship: Landscape after the Reform

Marek S. Szczepański

### **The Future of the Upper Silesian Scrub**

William Ewart Gladstone, the respected British politician of the nineteenth century, said some time ago that “we should not fight with the future. We should rather properly prepare for it”. The near future for Poland is European integration and strengthening the competitiveness of 16 new voivodships, created as a result of the Polish administrative reform of 1 January 1999. I omit the repeatedly expressed regrets concerning the unsatisfactory size and expanse of the Silesian Voivodship, called by malcontents because of its characteristic shape, the Upper Silesian scrub, and the lost chances for integration of the historic lands of the region. We should simply prepare a considerable, comprehensive account of its advantages and liabilities, its essential strengths and weaknesses. It is necessary to formulate the short-term and strategic aims and tasks of the authorities and the society of the voivodship in the first years of the third millennium and the arduous process of access to the European Community.

Surely one of the most important and most difficult tasks is a quick elimination of the loose threads left after the administrative reform of 1975 and the integration of the regions of Katowice, Częstochowa and Bielsko. The reform conducted 25 years ago meant — on one hand — another administrative division of Upper Silesia, and on the other — the beginning of the processes of the creation of a new identity and new integration. In other words, it began the process of building fresh references to small and regional homelands. The reform also created regional and local elites of authorities and their numerous clients having clearly specified aims and interests, who were not interested in changes of regional affiliation. At the same time, the undeniable civilisation and economic successes of those elites and the institutions directed by them after 1989, everlastingly

**Basic information about the Silesian Voivodship: opening balance —  
1 January 1999**

number of people: 4 894 (Katowice voivodship to 30 November 1998: 3 918)

area: 12 294 km<sup>2</sup> (Katowice voivodship to 31 December 1998: 6 650)

area of forests: 31.9%

area of arable soil: 37.2% (only 2.6% of all rural towns of the country will find themselves in the borders of the urbanised Silesian voivodship)

number of communes: 166

number of towns being administrative districts: 19

density of population: 398 persons on 1 km<sup>2</sup> (Poland: 124)

birth-rate: - 1.8%

level of demographic old age: 14.6%

death rate of infants: 13 pre mille

rate of unemployment: 6.2% (15.4% - 1 February 2002)

number of unemployed people: 129,5 thousand (313,2 thousand - 1 February 2002)

percentage of people with higher education degree: 8% (9% - 31 December 2001)

level of education at higher level: 18-20%; 25 — 2001/2002

state of the educational system: 8,2 thousand of kindergartens (first place Poland), 212 secondary schools, 810 professional secondary schools (first place in Poland), 295

number of years spent at school: 9,44 (Katowice voivodship: 9,57; Bielsko voivodship: 9,45; Częstochowa voivodship: 9,32; Poland's average: 9,59)

employment in the sector of services: 40%

net value of a monthly salary in five departments of economy (1 half of the year 1998): 956,5 Polish zlotys (first place in the country)

estimated own incomes: 439 481 200 (second place in the country after the Mazowieckie voivodship: 525 978 000)

estimated income for 1 inhabitant: 89,8 Polish zlotys

estimated income from the income tax of physical persons and from the income tax of legal bodies: 18.20 zlotys (second place in the country after Mazowieckie voivodship: 525 978 000)

amount of the compensatory subsidy: 3.09 zlotys (Mazowieckie voivodship: 0)

average size of a farm: 4.32 ha (former Bielsko voivodship: 2.50; former Katowice voivodship: 3.77 ha; former Częstochowa voivodship: 6.70 ha)

amount of accumulated post-industrial waste: about 1 million tons (and the former Katowice voivodship 900 million of tons)

number of firms: 324 thousand (including 130 thousand trade and repair firms and 37 thousand production firms employing 529 thousand people)

general number of employed people: 3 million

flats' resources: 1.5 million flats (second place in Poland after Mazowieckie voivodship: 1.6 million)

participation in the Gross National Product: 13%



changed the social references of local communities. It is not Upper Silesia within its historical borders, but certain parts created by administrative reforms have been a source of identity for a long time. Loose threads left after the reform and the location of borders and divisions remained mainly in the minds and the consciousness of inhabitants of Częstochowa and Bielsko, whereas it is known that human consciousness is slightly subject to violent changes, especially when they are badly prepared and preceded by sharp quarrels between the representatives of Polish regional and political classes.

Preserving all proportions, I base the importance of the process of social reintegration within the new voivodship on the previously described persistence of the historical partitioning in the area of Poland. In spite of a lapse of 80 years, the borders of Poland's former partitions have remained not only in the social consciousness but also in differences of behaviour and political options, cultural and economic activities, educational aspirations and even in the number of newspapers printed, conducted promotional and marketing actions, in the scale of social mobilisation and the participation of people in the structures of authorities. Until today, the best situation in terms of circumstances and mobilisation are the communes of the regions of West, North and Wielkopolska, which in the past, constituted part of Prussia and Germany. Their favourable state of affairs and the considerable activity of the local authorities allows us to predict favourable results in development and transformation procedures. The country's communes of Galicia and the Congress Kingdom of Poland are in a much worse state because they are outside the interference of a conglomerate, especially if they are deprived of concrete tourist attractions.

The task of reintegration, merger and keeping the existing cultural differences, must be strengthened by the efforts of social solidarity and solidity and social trust, not only within the new voivodship but also outside its borders. Undoubtedly these elements of social behaviour are one of the fundamental factors of economic development, notoriously disregarded by orthodox economists. The last Nobel prize winner in Economy (Gary Becker) praised a modern, socio-economical view on development and not the technocratic thinking about transformation understood as a constant increase of the Gross National Product. By the way, solidarity, solidity, cooperation, trust, social support, respecting of mutual obligations, accepted norms and the exchange of reliable information constitute the element of social capital. The care of its radical improvement is another important element in the development strategy of the Silesian voivodship.

## Social Capital — a dream of a sword

Cornelis van Eesteren, Holland's architect and town planner, said that *no town will be better or prettier than the community that creates it*. This simple thought has many meanings which are worth consideration also in the future Silesian voivodship. First of all, it indicates that the inhabitants, their education, culture, customs and values always decide on the wealth, beauty and power of the present town or region, or, on the contrary — on its carelessness or failure. Investments in health, education, protection of the family, cultural centres, places of work requiring qualifications, are the easiest — but the expensive — way to make the urban or regional *dream of power* come true.

The meaning of *social capital*, frequently — and without definition — used in journalistic elaborations and science essay writing or studies of a scientific character, is variously and multi-dimensionally understood. Many related meanings such as: *human capital*, *demographic capital*, *language capital*, *symbolic competences*, *collection competences*, *civilisation capital*, *cultural capital*, *educational capital*, *functional literacy* or *the range of human knowledge* are also used. Omitting numerous — and often dry — terminological quarrels and reference to the rich literature of the subject it is worth noting certain basic order assumptions. Firstly, the terms: **human capital**, **individual capital** and **individual range of knowledge** will be arbitrarily referred to a human unit or, using the personalised language, to a person. Whereas the **demographic**, **cultural** and above all **social capital** — to human communities and social groups. By individual capital, I understand the unit range of knowledge, cultural and language competences, which let the unit function in society, to take up adequate activities to realise its living aspirations. Whereas the **social capital** I understand as a cumulated range of competences and abilities of whole social groups, their abilities to take up activities in order to realise civilisation's challenges. A high level of social capital helps to meet these challenges and — adversely — a low level is an effective barrier to conquer them. A particular role in the development of social capital play: social solidity and solidarity, trust and respecting mutual obligations, norms of relations or passing information, were mentioned before.

Basic influence on social capital has the following features:

- accumulated ranges of knowledge established by formal education and self-education,
- education at home, in circles of friends, society and work circles, institutions outside school,



- accumulated socio-cultural activity of units, social communities and groups.

If the functions of the social capital are so important, there arises a question about its prognosticated state in the future Silesian voivodship. Full inspection is, of course, impossible and that is why I mainly concentrate on two of the most important elements of this capital: **demographic and educational capital and their strong and weak points**. People, their education, the readiness to act, demographic situation are — beside the economic capitals and the spirit of entrepreneurship — the basic conditions of success of the modernisation activities or their efficient obstacle. Beside this type of capital the **strong and weak points of technical, infrastructure and economic capital** will decide the ups and downs of the Silesian voivodship.

### On the Verge of Demographic Old Age

Demographic old age threatening the region can be recognised as a particularly important weak point of the demographic-social capital in the future Silesian voivodship. It is assumed that demographic old age begins when the participation of people at post-production age is at least 10% in relation to the people at production and pre-production age. The Silesian voivodship tangibly exceeded this verge of old age and it is approaching the second verge estimated at 15% (14.6%). The processes of getting old are accompanied by the low or even negative increase of the population, the decrease of marriages, increasing number of divorces and illegitimate births. If we took the data of 1999 we could calculate that the increase of the population in the communes forming the future Silesian voivodship would be negative, estimated at the level of –1.8%. In other words, the number of deaths (47.3 thousand) would be bigger than the number of births (45.5 thousand).

In the balance of the demographic capital we should not omit the high rate of infant mortality, the most sensitive and harmful barometer of civilisation's development or under-development. In the EC it does not exceed 4–6 pre mille, in the Silesian voivodship it will reach 8–9 pre mille in 2002, so it will be double the average in the EC. I appreciate the work of the doctors, paediatricians, their efforts, knowledge and professional enthusiasm but the statistics of the Central Census Bureau are undeniable. At the same time, they show the indispensability of structural reforms of the medical service and the necessity for their considerable capitalisation.



The following four negatives can be imputed to the educational capital of the future Silesian voivodship: permanently **low level of education and inadequate structure of education, small number of years spent at school, relative satisfaction of the level of education achieved and functional illiteracy.**

- **low level of education and inadequate structure of education:** at the end of 1997 the structure of the population's education of the contemporary Katowice voivodship (persons 15 years old and more) was unfavourable and inadequate at the same time. Sixty-five percent of inhabitants had an incomplete elementary, elementary or, at the most, basic technical education in the region. Only 27% finished secondary schools and 8% created a selective group of people having higher education in the region. Very approximate indicators are a feature of the Bielsko voivodship and, a little worse — of the Częstochowa voivodship. Thus, it is known that well-educated people who have a view created by an institutionally and programmatically reformed regional system of education, will decide on the ups and downs of the process of restructuring, its speed and character.
- **small number of years spent at school:** in 1992, the last year for which we have such data, the average number of education years for the whole country reached 9.59. The leaders were: Warsaw voivodship (10.45), Kraków voivodship (9.92), Wrocław voivodship (9.89), Łódź voivodship (9.86), Gdańsk voivodship (9.84), Poznań voivodship (9.77), Szczecin voivodship (9.66) and Lublin voivodship (9.60). Katowice voivodship was nine and the result was a little lower than the country's average (9.57). The place of Katowice voivodship is unsatisfactory because in this particular ranking all urban (agglomeration) voivodships left it behind and worse were mainly smaller voivodships (e.g. Bielsko voivodship: 9.45, Częstochowa voivodship 9.32) and rural voivodships having clearly deformed education structure (e.g. Kielce voivodship: 9.35, Przemyśl voivodship: 9.28 or the worst — Siedlce voivodship: 9.01). The above mentioned specification clearly shows that the number of years spent at school will decrease even further in the Silesian voivodship mainly because of the unfavourable indicators in the Bielsko and Częstochowa voivodships.
- **relative satisfaction of the achieved level of education:** in this context it is hard to omit the striking results of the research published in the *Report of Social Development of Katowice Voivodship* (1997). As many as 58% of inhabitants questioned in the region was satisfied with the level of education achieved and only 37% declared their

dissatisfaction. It is a consolation that 28.2% of people state that they have consistently raised their professional qualifications and among all employed people 34.9% complemented their education within the last five years. It is also worth noting that 61.8% of parents want a higher education (full time studies) for their sons and 64.3% for their daughters. Also the partial research conducted in Tychy and many other towns of the voivodship confirms that education and higher education are precious, existential values, located beside health and family happiness at the highest level of the aspiration hierarchy.

- **functional illiteracy:** the latest comparison studies on the level of functional illiteracy conducted in 1996 in Poland, Canada, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States show that as many as four out of 10 Poles reached only the lowest level of understanding simple **texts** (e.g. articles of newspapers, announcements), **documents** (e.g. sheets, guarantees, manuals) and conducting uncomplicated **calculations** (e.g. accounts, bank forms, income tax returns). *We came off much worse than the inhabitants of OECD countries. The best were Swedish: only seven out of 100 find themselves on the worst level. Thus the higher level was reached by three-seven Poles out of 100 (in relation to the scale of text, document or table) and every third Swede.* Over 75% of the Poles questions when shown two simple graphs could not answer the question about the relation between the level of the sale of fireworks and the number of accidents connected with them. Almost 40% of Poles could not state on the basis of the weather forecast map from one of the newspapers — according to the temperatures predicted — how much warmer it would be in Bangkok than in Seoul. Similarly, about 75% could not say correctly, on the basis of the timetable, what time the last bus left on Saturday evening. Jokingly, I can say that the authors of Polish timetables had an influence on the bad result for functional illiteracy, because the rubric in the timetables is sometimes bigger than the tables themselves. Even so, this fact will eliminate only to a restricted degree the feeling of relative and absolute handicap in relation to the inhabitants of the other six countries participating in the research.

## Wealth and Ambitions

A basic advantage of a small region and the strongest site of its demographic-social capital, is the large number of inhabitants giving rise to an extensive home market. Such human potential should have an influence on increasing demand and this will become a motivating force in the regional



economy. Raymond Aron, an outstanding French sociologist and expert in politics, stressed in his works that two kinds of capital decide on economic prosperity: human capital and capital of finances and assets. The Silesian voivodship is well equipped with considerable capital of both kinds. The wealth of the future Silesian voivodship will also have an important meaning. The new map of the region, which was so difficult to design, is strengthening Polish regional gulfs and creates two economically very strong voivodships: the **Mazowieckie** voivodship (estimated own income: 526 million a year, estimated income for a person: 104 zlotys, estimated number of private firms: 412 thousand) and the **Silesia** voivodship (adequately: 437 million; 89 zlotys, 303 thousand); seven economically strong and moderate voivodships: the Wielkopolskie voivodship, the Lower Silesia voivodship, the Małopolskie voivodship, the Łódź voivodship, the Pomorskie voivodship, the Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodship, and the Zachodnio-Pomorskie voivodship (adequately: 101–250 million, 60–70 zlotys, 122–250 thousand) and seven economically weak and very weak voivodships: the Opole voivodship, the Lubuskie voivodship, the Świętokrzyskie voivodship, the Warmińsko-Pomorskie voivodship, the Lublin voivodship, the Wschodniomałopolskie voivodship and the Podlaskie voivodship (adequately: 50–150 million, 46–60 zlotys, 70–100 thousand). In the future Silesian voivodship regional wealth will result in individual wealth and average wages will be higher by about 15–20% than the country's average.

The University of Silesia, Silesian University of Technology, Silesian Medical University and other higher schools in the region, science institutions of Częstochowa and Bielsko-Biała have considerable weight in the analysis of strong points of social or educational capital. We can assume that the Silesian voivodship will be fourth or fifth, according to size, science and an educational centre in the country. The fact will be weakened by the following information: almost three times bigger increase of the number of students is not matched by the increase of science staff and the adequate number of investments and repairs realised. Universities use the simplest reserves and the main group of students is in part-time studies under the retrenched teaching programmes.

Separate treatment is required, in the context of the balance of educational capital, the results of an empiric research conducted in October 1997 under my direction, in the framework of the research project: *The system of education as a factor of modernisation of Katowice voivodship*. In research devoted to the aspirations of the youth of primary and secondary schools, both, favourable and unfavourable tendencies were revealed. It appeared, for example, that not one of 665 pupils questioned,



Table 1. Universities in Poland (academic year 200/2001)

<i>Universities</i>	<i>Employment of academic teachers</i>	<i>Professors</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Faculties</i>
Warsaw	2631	762	48154	132
Jagiellonian	3242	433	24484	68
Poznań	2235	565	34000	60
Silesia	1751	337	36418	54
Wrocław	1797	337	30000	42
Lublin	1812	395	27706	38
Gdańsk	1502	285	21035	54
Toruń	1211	287	25350	32
Szczecin	1001	201	24716	27
Opole	691	190	13600	23
Białystok	731	151	13003	20

Two universities set up in 2001 were not taken into account: University of Rzeszów and University of Zielona Góra

chose coalminer or metallurgist as the profession of their dreams. Thus, coalmining, although in retrenchment and decreasing employment, will require qualified staff of all levels: lower, middle and higher. What I mean here is people choosing this difficult and dangerous profession and being committed and interested in it, not those coming to coalmines and steelworks by accident. Probably the situation of regional metallurgy and coalmining was shown in a bad light in the last few years and the liquidation of unprofitable coalmines had such an important influence on professional aspirations that it is possible that both these branches would suffer problems with well trained staff.

The healthy condition of science in the voivodship of the future is accompanied by a high level of social mobilisation and the awakening of professional aspirations. My research shows that 85.3% of pupils finishing secondary education want to study further, mainly at university level, and at a lower degree — in post-secondary schools. The most popular is the Silesian University of Technology (30.7%) with computing, architecture, building, automation, transport and communication. The two second places are taken by: the University of Silesia (12.9% — philology, psychology, sociology, computing and law) and the Academy of Economics (12.9% — marketing, management, banking, finances). Among other important science institutions the respondents pointed out the Higher Pedagogical School in Częstochowa (3.8%), Medical Academy, Higher Police School, Upper Silesian Higher Trade School (together 15%).

## **Dependents: Old and New Poverty**

A social problem for the Silesian voivodship in the future will not only be the existing enclaves of old poverty but also its new form and the process of originating the **underclass**. The idea of old poverty, connected with historically created and established poverty, arose in the period between the two world wars and passed on from one generation to another in real socialism. A specific feature of social policy in that period, due to political reasons was the tendency to hide the occurrence of poverty and its real size. Only the market economy revealed the scale of the occurrence and the range of the evident and tough economic, social, cultural and political ignorance of the existence of many people. Sometimes the whole districts of towns and numerous villages in wealthy voivodships appeared to be degraded not only in an urban and spatial sense but also in an economic, social and cultural sense. The most dangerous process is the legacy of poverty within families, districts of towns and whole villages because children repeat the ups and downs of their parents, creating the existing social ghettos. The main source of their maintenance is the help of state institutions and the non-government sector. A special feature of many groups affected by old poverty is their susceptibility to populist rhetoric and the conviction that help is owed to them.

Probably old poverty, found mainly in the historically working-class areas, will be accompanied by **new poverty** which is connected with the restructuring of coalmining, metallurgy and agriculture. The reduction — voluntary or otherwise — of 100,000 coalminers and 40,000 metallurgists, employed in social positions, is planned in the Silesian voivodship in the coming four years. In the region a whole generation of people will appear — defined in sociological terminology — as **useless or loose people**. Some of them will be given early redundancy of one unconditional single compensation. The coal basins of Germany, France or Wales underwent a similar process. In each of them almost one fourth of those dismissed, and sometimes even more, invested their compensations badly and returned to living on state benefits. To me, an important symptom of new poverty is the practice of buying 'on tick' in the shops near the centres of Silesian towns or on housing estates. Credit is marked up and paid on the days of payment of wages, pensions, unemployment benefits.

The Silesian voivodship also has one of the biggest in the country, after the Mazowieckie and Podkarpackie voivodships, (about 330 thousand at the end of 2002), compared to the average rate of unemployment in Poland, 16%. It is lowered due to social and political reasons. If the economical account was strictly applied in state-owned firms the rate of



unemployment would increase by 15–20%. The restructuring difficulties of the region would be deepened by the lack of traditions of working women, mainly from mining and metallurgist's families. This tradition was characteristic for the women living in Łódź and probably their occupational activity was one of important elements of success of the processes of economic purge in this region. It is interesting that, statistically, women are better educated than men but the jobs offered to them are very poor.

### *Three in One*

The balance of the weak and the weakest sides of economic, technical and infrastructure capital, which, surprisingly, may become economic assets, should be started with a statement that within its new boundaries, the Silesian voivodship will cease to be an industrial region and become an industrial, agricultural and forest area. It will preserve the character of agglomeration, however, it will be marked by large rural areas, and over 67% of the land will be taken up by arable land and forests. Therefore, three vital questions — mining, steel industry and agriculture, which impede access negotiations with the European Union, remain to be solved on this patch of land. The problems of the agricultural sector in the future of the voivodship are the considerable break-up of farms (an average area of 5.3 ha) and, despite good agricultural knowledge, low productivity, compared with the standards of the European Union, are the problems of the agricultural sector of the future voivodship.

Any consideration of the weak sides of economic capital cannot overlook the backwardness of the third sector — the services — in the regional economy. In most developed countries of the world, its share in global employment amounts to over 70 or even 80%, while in Poland the figure is lower by almost a half (about 42%). The first sector, including agriculture and the mining industry, and the second one, consisting of processing industry, are still disproportionately overdeveloped. In the Katowice voivodship, an analogous ratio of employment in the third sector amounted to only 42.1 in 1997, and although it was not below the national average, it showed the scale of deformation of the employment structure and the level of economic and civilization backwardness. The Katowice voivodship is, in fact, a city called Upper Silesia, with four million inhabitants, and it is difficult to compare the region with other backward areas of Poland, which lower the national average, eg. the voivodships of Chełm, Zamość, Ciechanów or Biało-Podlaskie. One may and should compare it, however, with other Polish agglomerations. As a result of such analyses the backwardness of the region is clearly seen in relation to the areas of Warsaw,



Kraków, Wrocław, agglomeration of Gdańsk, Sopot and Gdynia, or even Łódź. By the way, the ratio is going to get worse in the new voivodship, when one takes into account the relatively low percentage of people employed in services in the Częstochowa Voivodship and the only slightly better figure in the Bielsko voivodship. Therefore, it is important to fix — in the consciousness of the inhabitants of the new Silesian region, in the regional community and regional societies — a conviction regarding the necessity of tertiarising of the economy, that is, a dramatic increase in employment in services. It is not going to be easy mainly due to the previous years of manipulation pedagogy and the existing conviction of “the mission of the industrial working class” and the promotion of development performed by heavy industry which is still well established in the region.

Any analyses of economic and infrastructure capital which do not include the environmental state of the region will be incomplete and defective. It should be stressed that since 1991 the ecological situation in the Katowice voivodship has not been deteriorating. A stabilisation can be observed in this respect and in some cases, e.g. in that of emission of dust, a significant improvement is being seen. One must not forget, however, that the level of accumulated industrial waste located in the areas of industrial plants is still very high. In 1990 the total amount of it was estimated at 646.0 million tons while in 1997 the figure was 906.2 million tons (44% of total bothersome industrial waste in Poland). Incomplete data show that in 1993, the grounds destroyed by the mining industry totalled 25,000 hectares; by 2015 the deteriorated area will have increased by the next 8,000 hectares. There are still several sites in the voivodship storing especially dangerous industrial waste, which is difficult to recycle and may have a disastrous effect on the environment. The most notorious site are slag heaps located near the chemical plant Tarnowskie Góry. It is worth emphasising that in the neighbourhood of the plant the standards of concentration of cadmium are exceeded 430 times, those of barium — 460 times, zinc — 575 times, boron — 700 times. It has been estimated that neutralisation of this environmental bomb will take until 2004 and will cost over 1 trillion old Polish zlotys.

### *I am from a town*

A network of big towns with the Katowice conurbation is a major asset of the Silesian voivodship. There are 68 communes with town status within the boundaries of the new region. The agglomeration character of the Silesian voivodship resulted in the fact that its space has been filled with a dense network of social infrastructure, including in particular schools and

out-patient and in-patient medical centres. It is accompanied by an equally dense transport infrastructure — comparable in number with the European Union index. However, its quality is completely different and difficult to compare — especially road surface and standard. While discussing the infrastructure network, it is difficult not to mention easy access to energy carriers and a well-developed transmission network. Beneficial geographical and transport location, including trans-frontier situation, and relatively long borderline with the Czech Republic and Slovakia, should also be considered a great asset of the voivodship. While writing about a dense infrastructure network, one may not underestimate a considerable or even deep, near technical death — decapitalisation of social, municipal and housing infrastructure.

The Silesian voivodship will be characterised by a high concentration of companies and industrial areas as the voivodship's industry will gather about 324,000 companies employing three million people. This constitutes 13.02% of all Polish industrial entities and 21.25% of all the employed in Poland. The figures themselves show industrial power on the one hand, and the scale of restructuring problems, on the other, as the majority of the industrial sector consists of obsolete trades which are not competitive on European markets.

Jasna Góra Sanctuary, which lies within the boundaries of the voivodship, requires special treatment. While not taking up metaphysical, religious and cultural questions, a chance to develop centres of recreation and tourism, especially pilgrimage tourism, is worth emphasising in this context. It must be reminded that in 1997 the monastery in Częstochowa was visited by four million pilgrims who left only \$ 0.1 a day due to insufficiently developed infrastructure. However, a radical increase in tourist investments and considerable development of accompanying infrastructure is being planned, so that the town could be visited by five million pilgrims, who will leave \$5 a day.

This, most probably incomplete, balance of strong and weak sides of the future voivodship should be concluded with a reflection on large areas of fiscal benefits. Katowice Special Economic Zone with four sub-zones is situated within the new boundaries. It is worth stressing that, in particular, Tychy and Gliwice sub-zones enjoy great prosperity and foreign investments.

### *Restructuring: leading actors, crypto-servants and mass media*

The success of a restructuring programme will be possible when a group of *new individuals, pioneering workers* of modern mentality is formed,



who by no means should be only technocrats and managers, but also highly qualified workers, technicians and engineers. A modern personality is usually perceived as one of the key features and a necessity in modern society, and individuality is seen as an element of democratic order, and a cause for organised changes. Insufficient *supply of new individuals* in the Katowice voivodship is one of the crucial reasons for the unsatisfactory progress of the reconstruction process. Among the most important characteristic features, representing the ideal of the types, of modern personality and new individualism are the following:

- ⇒ Developed drive for success:
  - firm inclination to take risks, coupled with awareness of results and consequence of doing so,
  - being predisposed and fit for innovations,
  - analytic assessment of activities undertaken, both those resulting in success and in failure,
  - drive for obtaining best results only when competing, and the success makes the activities of an individual even more dynamic,
  - need for achievement, which motivates individuals for quick and reliable performance in competition,
  - need to learn connected with ability for synthetic and logical thinking, abstract reasoning, foreseeing, identifying conditions for phenomena and processes,
- ⇒ high level of empathy,
- ⇒ non-conformity,
- ⇒ openness for new experiences,
- ⇒ readiness to accept consciously changes,
- ⇒ ability to gather information about facts and to use knowledge at hand in activities undertaken,
- ⇒ ability to plan both personal and family affairs as well as public ones,
- ⇒ inclination to calculate, which results from the conviction that the human world is countable, and many things can be successfully foreseen,
- ⇒ high opinion on technical abilities, which make it easier to use new equipment and technology,
- ⇒ understanding the logic of production processes, and principles of decision-making at a basic level,
- ⇒ high educational and professional aspirations,
- ⇒ awareness of the dignity of others as well as respect for the dignity of others,

- ⇒ universality and optimism in action,
- ⇒ conviction that the physical world (nature) can be tamed,
- ⇒ giving up fatalism and predestination,
- ⇒ orientation towards the future,
- ⇒ liberal and/or democratic personality,
- ⇒ caring about one's health.

Activities towards mobilising individuals and towards new individualism should be supported by activities which mobilise social groups, in particular micro-groups (workers, families), medium-sized groups (local communities), and macro-groups (sections of social classes and strata) and institutions (e.g. schools). A particular role in the process of social mobilisation for transformations of the regional system may be played by the family. As it is known, the family functions as a key socialising institution, which prepares new generations for social life, influences accepted patterns of professional and social mobility, shared systems of values and norms. It is important, then, for it not to maintain and support values which in modern circumstances may be considered outdated. We mean here particularly the discontinuation of the tradition of inheriting such jobs as miner, metallurgist, coke plant worker, mythologised in “real socialism”, with a simultaneous popularisation of “new ethos of labour”, based on the traditional respect for work, yet spreading new patterns of career and promotion, connected with the latest technologies and equipment, scientific research, etc. Walt Whitman Rostow, an American economist, stated that even change in the traditional system is conditioned by the natural desire of parents for a better and easier life for their children, for better positions, and more responsible role for them. This re-orientation in upbringing from within the family is certainly a lengthy and time-consuming process, but it seems necessary for the future modernisation and creating new ethos of labour. Those who organise changes in the production system should also take into consideration the fact that within a traditional family of miners or metallurgists, a particular role belongs to the housewife. She is usually the manager of the family, the disposer of money, the one responsible for consumer decisions of the household, the one who organises life, and thus, the one who will not remain indifferent to the process of modernising (restructuring). Admitting the value of that specific socio-professional category of housewives, not without reason labelled *crypto-servants*, should not be considered a marginal task in the modernisation process. Incidentally, the real role of housewives in the process of modernisation had already been indicated by such eminent scientists as John K. Galbraith or Jan Szczepański. Housewives, equal to



their working husbands, should be informed about the sense, conditions, and consequences of the modernisation process, while a particular role in this *indoctrination may be performed by regional and local mass media*.

Mobilisation for restructuring may, at least to a certain degree, be taken over by institutions grouping neighbours, people of the same housing estate, district, by local associations and organisations. In the leading countries of the world, this particular process of developing power, which is well advanced, is connected with the discovery of a “lesser heaven” of local community. There are also no formal obstacles for speeding up in this field in the Katowice voivodship. It is worth noticing here that numerous successful restructuring projects started exactly with social consolidation around an idea of *counting only on themselves* by regional and local communities (*let's help ourselves and then the bank and heaven itself will help us*).

The development and advanced reorganisation of regional and local mass media, which stress the need for succeeding and promotion in the most modern branches of industry, and which stress the value of Silesian culture and various cultures of new inhabitants of the voivodship, are indispensable elements for the success of the modernisation project.<sup>1</sup> In line with the enhanced liveliness of small communities, the career for small magazines, local radio stations, and regional television starts. A substantial percentage of audiences is interested in the events in which they participate themselves, or which they know well. Those predilections need to be used in the modernisation of the region. Regional television, radio and local press should translate the sense of restructuring principles of the voivodship, town, rural commune, or even individual enterprises. Thus, it is desired for the *Echo* in Tychy to popularise restructuring ideas concerning local coal mines, and *Głos Pszczyński* (periodical in Pszczyna) or *Nowiny Gliwickie* (weekly in Gliwice) — their local enterprises, etc. An important role in dissemination of information may also be played by periodicals in factories, local wire broadcasting centres, and specialised periodicals (e.g. *Rodnia*, *Kalendarz Górniczy Kopalni Ziemowit*, *Lędziny Teraz*). As a matter of fact, the point is for the viewer, reader or listener to understand “what is being communicated”. We know of instances where costly programmes of modernisation, which were planned in detail, failed due to the most trivial reasons. Namely, they were too sophisticated linguistically and conceptually. In order not to fall into the trap of *false preconception of knowledge*, transmission of modernisation ideas must be adjusted to the average level of symbolic competence. This does not mean that people with a high competence should be neglected. Bearing them in

mind, programmes, articles and broadcasts of a more sophisticated nature may be prepared.

*Restructuring of the Silesian Voivodship: the beneficiaries and the malcontents*

Thanks to sociological studies, we know that success in key transformations of the system depends largely upon the positive approach by both individuals and social groups. Generally speaking, people's attitudes may be positive towards restructuring and inclined to accept it or, on the contrary, indifferent, passive, non-accepting or even violently resisting. If, then, in a social system, in individual or group consciousness, no need or acceptance for changes (restructuring) gets established, the process of change will be slow, often resulting in a deformed and pathological profile. What is particularly important here is to be aware of the indispensability of changes by their main actors and subjects: regional and local communities, as well as individuals.

In the big projects in development and restructuring which ended in a positive or negative way, all possible approaches had their manifestations, from approval to violent resistance. Restructuring is always performed for somebody and in somebody's interest, simultaneously infringing interests of individuals or social groups involved in maintaining the *status quo* or even fighting to restore the *status quo ante*. Therefore, this is a game of zero, in which one man's success is another man's loss. In some extreme cases, this may prove to be a game in which the result is negative, in which — at least for some time — all participants turn out to be defeated. Passive or active resistance towards changes is most of all manifested by individuals or social groups for whom modernisation appears to be an existential threat and a source of mental discomfort. Therefore, the contesting groups consist of people with the lowest qualifications, connected with the old-fashioned production and extractive industries (e.g. mining) on the one hand, and, on the other hand, their management, rewarded in a special way (financially and symbolically — prestige), both in real socialism and in the period of transformation.

Employees and whole local communities cannot be surprised at the consequences of the activities that had been undertaken, and must be properly prepared for them. They should not — as has been the rule so far — get information about their own destiny, as regards professional careers, from the press, incidental information or gossip. Restructuring should not, or even cannot, be associated with existential threats. On the contrary, it creates prospects for life, which depends on the individual



efforts of people. Meanwhile, mistakes in information policy, lack of clear programmes and restructuring principles result in associating the process with two disasters, treated in the Katowice Voivodship as elementary: closing down the benefactor — a mine or steelworks and unemployment. How deep and dangerous frustrations among employees are, due to a badly prepared campaign of closing down of plants which are unprofitable and harmful for the environment, may be seen in the examples of individual or group behaviour of workers from steelworks (Huta Borek), coking plants (Koksownia Jadwiga) or coal mines (KWK Saturn, KWK Sosnowiec, KWK Paryż, KWK Niwka-Modrzejów or Siersza). Many of them can hardly imagine the possibilities of quick re-training or entering into independent economic activities. Predominate were claims, coupled with the conviction that making people redundant was not due to economic reasons, but resulted from manipulation of superiors, ministers and central government. Although it would certainly be an exaggeration to describe the present situation in the labour market as panic, one should not underestimate the overpowering fears of employees facing further consequences of unpopular reforms. Such mistakes cannot be repeated in the voivodship, while the information about modernisation of the production system, its conditions, and its importance for the employee himself, his family, local and regional community, should be disseminated in a straightforward and clear way as quickly as possible. Otherwise, *rebellious groups of employees* may become clients of radical and relatively well-organised political parties and forces.

### *The regional political arrangement — combatants of power*

A particularly important task, at the initial stage of the restructuring process is the reconstruction of the political system and its structures. The rise of new elites appears the most prominent or, to express it better: the rise of local and regional political counter-elites, which, in the long run, eliminate the elites which were based not on their true qualifications and competence, but on combatant, communist, or solidarity past experiences. Although spectacular changes had taken place in the region, the old elites still have a strong decision-making influence in both managing and running the region. The rotation of regional political elites and the reduction of the “real socialism” mechanism of managing should be, as it seems, carried out in two stages. It will soon be required to reduce further the regional red tape in politics and economy, this bureaucracy is mainly linked with the mining-metallurgy complex. That professional group is interested in preserving the old economic status of the region, as an

enclave providing the country with raw materials. Characteristic here is its tendency to petrify the economic structures and, *per saldo*, also political ones, which is not incidental. One should be fully aware of the fact that in the past — and even at present — this regional *bourgeoise de la fonction publique* received gratification in two ways: in money and prestige (symbolically). According to various — albeit invariably unofficial — data, the medium and high level bureaucracy in mining “consumes” half the income received by all employees in that branch. At the same time, one cannot underestimate the symbolic and prestigious aspects and prerogatives resulting from the substantial strength and, still big, decision-making abilities preserved by this social and professional group.

It seems necessary in the second stage — already mentioned — to create new, alternative political elites, to reduce, bring about or restore the proper dimensions, the role of the industrial mining-metallurgy lobby. To make such activities efficient, that lobby should be deprived of the possibilities of defining and implementing basic goals and directions of investments in the region and also, if not first of all, redistributing abilities. The main factor which makes the creation of alternative elites difficult is, beside existing legal and institutional restrictions, also the meagreness of potential groups for recruitment for such elites. It turns out that many active individuals, with developed drive for success and sufficiently provided culturally, had already joined or been absorbed by the bureaucratic elites of the past decades. Some fragmentary studies and observations done locally suggest that in some centres the beginning for the shaping of new elites had already started, although that process is far from being over. The main institutions around which such groups were formed were, on the one hand, new political parties and, on the other hand, “Solidarity” trade unions and other trade unions in enterprises, as well as organisations grouped around the church.

A spectacular proof for the thesis of necessity of creating new regional elites is provided by the activities of a strong group of MPs from the Silesian voivodship. In times of fundamental changes in the political system, they were unable to create a political lobby, efficient in winning favourable decisions in budget and initiatives in introducing new laws. They also differed in opinions expressed by parties, in the most crucial undertakings in the voivodship, such as, for instance, the *Regional Contract*. Political orientation had also its effect on diametrically opposed judgements of budgetary decisions or important institutional initiatives (e.g. the Upper Silesian Fund). A relative consensus reached by the whole group may be noted only in a few instances, among which one can mention the defence of *green schools* prepared for youths from those areas of the voivodship,



where the environment had been destroyed to the greatest degree. This critical assessment cannot be altered by the fact that, among the MPs from the Katowice group, one can find few efficient and hardworking people.

Decisive elimination of the procedure of making the natural and social environment pay most of the costs of functioning of enterprises, is a particularly important task for the new elites, which will be a recruitment basis for the local and regional authorities. The enterprises are, in particular, coal mines which practise grabbing economy, and which do not compensate sufficiently for the damage they cause (destruction of buildings, roads, dumping salty and radioactive waters into rivers and lakes). Curtailing this requires, however, clearer regulations at the central and branch level. They should guarantee efficient execution of funds and goods to be used for the liquidation of environmental and social damage caused by industrial activities.

### *Regional cultural arrangement in the process of restructuring*

Sociological research proves that the main source of cultural identity — consolidated at the turn of nineteenth and twentieth century — was the labour ethos of workers. It had been strengthened and crystallised by deep relations of the native people with Catholicism, local priests and institutions of church. The feeling of ethnic separation had also its importance, together with forms of social consciousness and national identity, typical for the borderline community. Additionally, the cultural identity was strengthened by a high level of identification and connection with place and space, to use the terminology of Yi-Fu Tuan,<sup>2</sup> of belonging to a wider family, and a very advanced degree of self-organisation (choirs and circles of singers, local societies and unions, etc.). Kazimierz Kutz, a prominent film and TV director, in an interview for "Gazeta Wyborcza", said, "Silesia preserved traditions of tribal culture, which, in time, turned into parish culture. This was supplemented later with communities of workers and neighbours from the same building. It grew over the years and remained in native enclaves until today. All those processes were united by the use of dialect and practicing popular Christianity. A priest was always someone "ours", familiar, just like in the parable — a shepherd with his sheep. However, the family was a fundamental unit — life in a clan and strong matriarchate. Because of strong family ties, Silesia remained Polish. The region preserved what was primary. This was exactly what the authorities always loathed, and what the authorities tried to use for their favour. It is worth pointing out that the attributes of Upper Silesian identity quoted by Kutz are not unique, as they also appeared — varying in intensity — all

over Latin Europe.<sup>3</sup> By the way, those attributes, in line with his own *licentia poetica*, were recalled by the late Horst Bieniek, a German writer born in Upper Silesia. He wrote: “A coalmine, inn, church and bed — the four are four posts of the Silesian canopy, to put it bluntly: to work, to booze, to pray and to copulate, these four things made an Upper Silesian essentially happy. Probably, he would like to earn some more money to be able to drink more, and would like to fuck more in order to be able to confess more...”<sup>4</sup>

The respect for tradition identified in the regional community can by no means signify an un-criticised idealisation of it. It is known that some elements of tradition, in the most general sense, cannot be reconciled with the planned process of restructuring. For example, by no means can the conviction of the pro-development role of extractive industries be maintained, as they praise the ethos of hard physical labour. It is also difficult to accept the duplication in new generations, education patterns at vocational level only, and the “inheritance of occupational traditions”. As a matter of fact, only the “positive core” of tradition should be preserved, and will be one of the sources of maintaining cultural identity, that is individual and collective identification with a definite axiological system, customs, morals and symbols.

### *Darwin society*

Endeavours to cure traditional economic sectors and their competitiveness on the European market (especially that of the European Union) will be the main objective of transformational efforts, which are being taken in the Silesian voivodship — this problematic but prospective region of the country. These actions should be accompanied by an unambiguous rejection of mythological ideas and projections, which are present in the minds of the major part of the regional political class and social strata. They concern, among others, the European Union and its functioning, especially in relation to regions under restructuring. As Antoni Kukliński rightly wrote, “We Poles cherish an illusion that the European Union is a great St. Francis Association whose main concern is how to help poor regions and poor strata (...). Yet one should remember that the European Union is most of all a Darwin Society. The society supports the interests of the strong partners of the Union. It is a machine which was designed in order to form favourable mechanisms of competition, although it must also have so-called cohesive funds.” Therefore, one can say that the European Union, in this sense and shape, is the future of Poland and the Silesian voivodship. However, instruments of regional policy have not been



prepared so far. This policy would allow the Silesian voivodship to enter a process of fast reintegration and consolidation within new boundaries as well as to gain competitiveness with regions of the EU countries. Under no circumstances should one be discouraged by failures of many reformist projects which have been implemented in the voivodship hitherto. Henry Ford used to say: "A failure is only an opportunity to start again in a more intelligent way."

## Notes

- 1 An important role, within this field, is played by a monthly *Śląsk (Silesia)*, set up by its director Tadeusz Kijonka in 1995.
- 2 Yi-Fu Tuan: *Przestrzeń i miejsce*. Warszawa 1987.
- 3 Cz. Robotycki: *Śląska historia i śląska tradycja. (Silesian History and Silesian Tradition)* Śląskie Prace Etnograficzne. (Silesian Studies in Ethnography). M. Lipok-Bierwiazzonek (ed.). Katowice 1990, vol I.
- 4 H. Bienek: *Opis pewnej prowincji (Fragmenty). [Description of a Certain Province (Excerpts)]*. *Naglos*, No. 15/16, 1994, p. 118.

# Silesia and the Politics of Regionalisation in Poland

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## Introduction

Until recently studies of the politics of transition in Eastern Europe have focused overwhelmingly on national elites. As a consequence insufficient attention has been paid to the crucial role played by regional elites and sub-national institutional arrangements in shaping the trajectory of change in these countries. The process of accession to the EU has underscored the importance of the regional level, not only because of the responsibilities sub-national actors will have in implementing various provisions of the *acquis communautaire*, but also in terms of mobilising opinion for or against the European Union given the underdevelopment of party systems at this level. In its examination of the politics of regionalisation in Poland and of attitudes to the European Union at the sub-national level, this chapter adopts a case study approach exploring these two critical and interrelated issues through the particular experience of Silesia.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part it examines the politics of regionalisation in Silesia. It shows how a regional voice emerged in Silesia as a consequence of the fall of the communist system and the beginning of Poland's democratic transition and suggests that due to the impact of path-dependent factors, Upper Silesia can be considered a special case in the regionalisation process in Poland. The second part of the chapter considers the process of regionalisation in relation to the EU enlargement process. In particular, it examines how the candidate countries are adapting the *acquis communautaire* into their national legislation in preparation for entry. In addition, the chapter investigates the impact of enlargement on elite values by presenting comparative results from large-scale local elite interviews conducted in five cities across Eastern Europe.



The research identifies a 'regional gap' in the enlargement process; that is, enlargement has remained a national elite to Commission interaction with little involvement of sub-national actors who in many cases fail to see its direct relevance for them.<sup>1</sup> However, it is striking that in the case of Katowice this regional gap is far less evident suggesting that the devolution of power to the regional level, the advance of the accession process and the stronger sense of regional identity in the area are contributing to a deepening of elite commitment to the process of European integration that is not characteristic of equivalent elite values in other candidates. The authors recognise the Katowice results need not be representative of Polish regions in general, but they are significant given the economic and political importance of Silesia as a region. This work draws on elite interviews that were carried out in Upper Silesia in the former Katowice region in 1995–96 and interviews carried out in the new voivodship of Silesia in 2001–02 (see map on pages 109–110).<sup>2</sup> In both periods the interviews were concentrated on the elites of the capital Katowice.<sup>3</sup>

## 1998 Regional Reform

The 1998 reform of administrative structures, the introduction of a tier of regional self-governance and the long debates surrounding different reform proposals have been extensively documented in other work.<sup>4</sup> This chapter therefore provides a brief summary of the reform as a context for our research findings. The issue of the restructuring of the state and decentralisation of administrative structures was immediately placed on the political agenda as Poland commenced its transition to democracy in 1989. However, though the question of the decentralised governance arrangements of Poland was a matter for discussion at the roundtable talks and the Local Government Act was approved in 1990, it was not until 1998 that the legislation was passed paving the way for a regional level of self-governance in Poland.<sup>5</sup>

The Polish reform that was enacted, *inter alia*, by the 1998 laws on district and voivodship self-government, was largely an endogenous development (though this is not to say that external factors, and in particular the country's bid for EU membership did not influence the reform)<sup>6</sup>. Poland's largely endogenous regionalisation sets it apart from other CEECs where such reforms have been undertaken in response to perceived pressures from the European Union for a strengthening of 'regional capacity'.<sup>7</sup>



Map 1



According to Gilowska et al., the reform had four main aims:

- the strengthening of the management capacities of the state through the devolution of tasks to a lower level, at the same time leaving the centre and regional levels to focus on strategic matters,
- the establishment of a new territorial system combining units of self-government and central administrative deconcentrated units at the regional level,
- the construction of democratic institutions at all three levels of society,
- the adjustment of 'the territorial state organisation and the corresponding local government structure to EU standards'.<sup>8</sup>

Other writers have emphasised the importance of integrated regional development in the design of the reform. So, for example, in the case of the new region of Silesia, it combined the more prosperous region of







the new institutions of local and regional governance was also partially reformed. For local authorities, 70 per cent of revenues are derived from the central budget via tax-sharing and transfers, and 30 per cent are raised locally. However, regional elites in Poland remain dissatisfied with the current financing arrangements as the vast majority of their funds are transferred from the national budget and are raised from taxes collected locally or other sources of local revenue. Not only have insufficient funds been devolved to the regional level for them to perform their functions effectively but the size of the regional budget is no more than that of the budget of urban districts.<sup>10</sup> This has led critics to talk of a decentralisation of competencies without a corresponding decentralisation of finances.<sup>11</sup>

### **Regionalisation in Silesia**

As in the rest of Poland the moves towards regionalisation which occurred in Silesia in the 1990s were characterised by demands for greater decentralisation of power. However, in large part due to the peculiarities of its history, in particular its long period of separation from the rest of Poland (1348–1922) and the period of inter-war autonomy, Silesia is in many ways a special case which stands out from the rest of Poland.<sup>12</sup> On the one hand, it has exhibited a higher level of activism and radicalism among the regional elite in the post-communist period, with much more assertive demands for greater powers to be deconcentrated from the centre to the regional level. On the other hand, there has been much greater concern among national elites at the centre at the potential for separatism in Silesia should more powers be decentralised in any meaningful manner. In the early post-communist period, for example, voivode Wojciech Czech was a supporter of autonomy for Silesia, raising concerns in the capital about Silesian separatism. During the period of debate over the regional reform in the mid-nineties radical proposals continued to emanate from Silesia but these proposals were framed in terms of demands for further decentralisation (rather than autonomy) which would be implemented throughout Poland and not confined simply to Silesia as in the early period. For example, Zygmunt Frankiewicz, mayor of Gliwice and chairman of the influential Union of Upper Silesian Communes, favoured an elected voivode over the then existing situation where the voivode was nominated by the Prime Minister upon the suggestion of the minister of internal affairs and thus served the interests of the centre instead of the region.<sup>13</sup> The tension between the centre and Silesia was reflected in the challenge of overcoming the inherited tradition of communist decision-making. The significance of the 1998 reform, consequently, lies in how it contributed to



the overcoming of the communist monist tradition and led to a redefinition of the central-regional balance of power, with regard to (i) the decentralisation and democratisation of administration, and (ii) the engagement of the national elite in the process of regional restructuring organised on a territorial basis.

### *The historical legacy of Silesian autonomy*

Following the 1922 plebiscite, the Katowice part of the Upper Silesian region was incorporated into Poland. As a result, the region of Silesia enjoyed a unique political and economic status in interwar Poland. In political and administrative terms substantial powers were devolved to the regional authorities; the Silesian voivode had much wider competencies than his counterparts in other regions. Moreover, what is particularly important in the context of this chapter is the formation of an elected regional parliament — the Regional Diet.<sup>14</sup> This historical experience of regional autonomy informed elite thinking during the debate on regionalisation in the recent postcommunist period. Silesian elites focused their demands on a radical decentralisation of power and financial resources, with a strong democratic dimension to regional authority. This was encapsulated in the oft-mentioned phrase during interviews with the regional elite in 1995–96 of the aspiration ‘to rule in one’s own home’ (*“rządzić we własnym domu”*) which was shown to be deeply-rooted not only among members of the native Silesian elite but also shared more widely among the local community. The demands for regional autonomy which were formulated at the beginning of the 1990s by Silesian elites, gave rise to considerable animosity in other regions and at the centre in Polish politics.

Some members of the local elite looked back to the inter-war period in an idealised way as a time when the region experienced democratic and decentralised rule. In addition, the inter-war period of autonomy has been seen as a time when the region enjoyed successful economic development.<sup>15</sup> The period of autonomy has been contrasted negatively with the post-war period of socialist centralisation and the fear of recession and peripherisation in the region in the recent postcommunist period.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless the prior experience of democratic governance at the regional level in contrast to the rest of the country means that there are more proactive attitudes to the region in terms of political and economic interactions and networking with other countries and also in relation to the EU enlargement process — and that the region is less reliant on the centre as its main interlocutor with Europe.<sup>17</sup>

### *Centralisation and persecution during the communist period*

After the Second World War, as in the rest of Poland, decentralisation was replaced by extreme recentralisation. In Upper Silesia, the policy of national selection introduced under Nazi rule led to the so-called *Volksliste* Silesians being accused of having betrayed the Polish nation.<sup>18</sup> As a consequence the Polish authorities carried out the so-called national verification action, that led to mass emigration to Germany and a legacy of mistrust of the ethnic Silesian population which remained in Poland. Silesians were removed from the regional administration and higher managerial positions in the region. Though these policies were enforced most actively in the immediate post-war years, systematic discrimination was maintained throughout the post-war period and contributed to a second wave of emigration in the seventies. The persecution of the Silesian population led to a strengthening of the community incentives for self-preservation and a fostering of cultural traditions in the region. In contrast to other regions of the country where regional identity was weak and people identified with the country as a whole, people in Silesia due to the region's early and prolonged separation from Poland reinforced by the inter-war regional autonomy arrangements and state persecution in the post-war era had a strong ethnic and regional identity that was distinctive in post-war Poland.

This stronger sense of regional identity in Silesia has persisted into the post-communist era. During interviews with mayors of the larger towns in the Katowice voivodship conducted in 1995–96, interviewees were asked why they had decided to stand as candidates in the 1990 local elections. Incomers (i.e. Poles who came from other regions) tended to focus on national-level referents, such as the historic moment in Polish history and their sense of duty to their country. Native Silesians tended to attach equal importance to regional-level referents, such as the importance for their town and Silesia, reflecting their stronger sense of regional history and the importance they attached to local and regional decentralisation.

### *Transition to democracy and the re-emergence of a regional voice in Silesia*

The specific values of the elite in the region of Silesia have, as suggested earlier, been shaped by historical memories of inter-war autonomy and by a strong sense of identity reinforced by state repression in the post-war period as well as by the differing attitudes to public service in the voivodship.<sup>19</sup>



In Silesia support for greater regional self-government was immediately manifest as Poland commenced its transition to democracy in the late 1980s. The influential Upper Silesian Union was formed in 1989 and mobilised Silesians in local elections as part of the umbrella organisation of the Citizens' Committees.<sup>20</sup> The exigencies of regional restructuring and the specific characteristics of Katowice, formerly a heavy industrial power house of communist Poland and now facing serious economic problems dovetailed with the demands for the devolution of power to the regional level. One of the primary expectations that elites in Silesia had in terms of further administrative reform was that it would create conditions for the region to have a stronger voice at the national level. It was expected that the regional elite would be consulted on regional policy, especially in terms of regional restructuring.

External factors and in particular the question of EU enlargement were rarely mentioned in the debates on Poland's regionalisation in the early to mid-1990s. This was largely due to the fact that the extension of the administrative reform, which had begun in 1990 with the reform of local government, to the district and regional levels was seen as a natural continuum. This reform had to all intents and purposes been stalled by the post-communist government of Waldemar Pawlak despite the fact that all the necessary organisational and legislative preparation had been carried out by the government of Hanna Suchocka. Pawlak favoured strong central government and opposed regionalisation, regarding a continuation of the status quo as the most effective means of preserving the political influence of the Polish Peasants Party at the local level. Throughout the period 1990–97, the national elite concentrated mainly on national level policy issues, failing to recognise the importance of the regional level. This was in part due to the vacuum of power at the regional level; public administration was still extremely centralised and fragmented by industrial sectoral ministries, a hangover from the communist system. This administrative structure which centralised power at the national level and marginalised the regional level also limited the central elite's capacity to manage the regional level effectively. In the case of Upper Silesia, the regional problems were exacerbated by the distinctiveness of the region within Poland as a whole, in particular by the problems relating to the restructuring of heavy industry.

The economic reform rationale for further regionalisation was one of the key issues that came to the fore during this long interim period between the first and second round of decentralising reforms. For the region of Upper Silesia further delay in the regionalisation process meant a delay in creating the urgently needed conditions for the restructuring of heavy

industry and for the shift to a more intensive form of regional economic development. There were fears among the regional elite that Silesia, under communism a centre of heavy industry with numerous economic privileges, would as a result of economic reform and the change in state priorities be relegated to being an impoverished and marginalised region on the Polish periphery.

Thus, Poland's transition dynamics contributed to growing tensions between central and regional elites. In this critical situation, the regional elite in Silesia tried to assume responsibility from the national elite and even to wrest greater power from the centre in order to initiate the regional restructuring by themselves. (For example, voivode Wojciech Czech formed a set of regional institutions, which were intended to supervise certain areas of the regional economy in order to initiate their restructuring at the regional level, the most important of these was the Upper Silesian Agency for Development and Promotion; later moves took the form of the Regional Contract, see below). Though these efforts ultimately failed, they did succeed in forcing the national elite into action. The regional elite was instrumental in compelling the central elite to recognise the need for Silesian restructuring, as well as for the formation of an effective decentralised regional administrative structure.

The first programmes of regional restructuring were prepared in the early 1990s and were characterised by demands for greater autonomy though there was less clarity over what exactly such autonomy would actually entail (1990–1994). Over time more moderate proposals for decentralisation, which were more politically acceptable to the national elite, were drawn up. The next phase in the regional elite's work on the preparation of programmes for regional restructuring was the Regional Contract signed in October 1995 by representatives of the regional elite of Katowice voivodship and the government. The Regional Contract was exceptional in Poland's transition experience, being the only agreement of its kind signed between regional representatives and the central government though the drafters argued that such contracts would later be signed by other Polish regions. The contract is particularly interesting as it shows the clash between the pro-reformist actions of the regional administrative elite with regard to the restructuring of heavy industry and the more conservative approach of the central elite. (The case of the restructuring of Upper Silesia reflects the wider problem of the restructuring of heavy industry in post-socialist countries and the division between sector-oriented approaches often favoured by central ministries versus a more integrated approach proposed by the regional elites who have argued that



successful restructuring could only be achieved if restructuring projects were territorially integrated at the regional level.)

All the projects prepared by the regional administrative elite, both the early ones and the Regional Contract, shared certain common characteristics: firstly, an attempt to revitalise the dysfunctional regional administration, and secondly, an endeavour to address the critical economic situation of the region of Upper Silesia. The Regional Contract can be regarded as an interim solution in the absence of further regional economic restructuring and administrative reform. It was an attempt by the regional elite to secure decentralised powers for Katowice's regional administration in the interim period before the 1998 territorial reform of district and regional administration was passed and implemented.

### *Outcomes of reform*

The 1998 reform of regional governance can be considered a success above all due to the fact that it led to the formation of a nationwide tier of democratic regional government for the first time in the history of Poland. Nevertheless, there are a number of serious shortcomings in the reform.

Though our local elite interviewees in Katowice (conducted in 2001–02) were clearly in favour of the decentralising reforms, many of our respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their final outcome which many considered had been compromised for political reasons. Among the most serious problems cited, first and foremost was the issue of financial decentralisation. Despite the devolution of power over economic development to the regional level, the government failed to decentralise the requisite financial resources thus keeping regional actors dependent on the centre. Secondly, it was felt that the final designation of the number and shape of the regions had as much to do with party politics as with any logic or coherence of regional development. In Upper Silesia for example, there is now the need for a redefinition of the regional entity. Many elite members fail, for the time being, to identify with the new post-1998 regional layout, and rather continue to identify with the former regions. As a result of the reform the new Silesian region (województwo śląskie) now incorporates the former voivodships of Katowice, Bielsko-Biała and Częstochowa. An additional problem is the fact that the division of roles and responsibilities between the voivode and marshal has fostered rivalry and a lack of cooperation between these different centres of power.<sup>21</sup> This has already been manifest in the case of Silesia with the duplication of the functions of the Department of Foreign Cooperation in both the marshal

and voivode's offices as well as in the attempts by successive voivodes (Kempski and Winkler) to widen their competences.

When members of the regional elites in the voivode's office and the marshal's office, who lived, for example, in Bielsko-Biała and Częstochowa and who are now working in Katowice as a result of the reform, were interviewed after the reform, and were asked questions about Katowice or the region of Silesia, they shifted in their answers to their former regions with which they continued to identify. This observation is striking as it applied to nearly all (98 percent) of the elite. Furthermore it raises the question of how a successful regional strategy can be created if the actors have not yet developed a regional perspective. This process is further hindered by the fact that the town of Katowice was not seen as a visible capital of the new region; even before the 1998 reform, when the Katowice voivodship was still in existence its preeminence was regularly challenged by other towns in the agglomeration.

### **Silesia, Regionalisation and EU Enlargement**

The fact that the issue of EU accession hardly featured in local elite attitudes to the process of regional reform in the mid 1990s does not mean that the elite was not interested in Poland's EU membership but rather that they did not necessarily see the direct relevance or potential significance of EU entry to the regional level at that time. EU accession was seen then more in terms of the philosophical, romantic notions of a 'return to Europe', cementing the historical ties of Silesia with Europe — rather than in terms of immediate and potential financial and technical assistance benefits, such as in the form of Structural Funds. However, adaptation to the conditionalities of the EU for regional capacity was an impulse behind the preparation of the 1998 reforms. For example, in the 1998 National Programme of Preparation for Membership of the EU, it was already assumed that the central administration at the regional level and the self-governing units would take over the responsibilities related to the management and supervision of Structural Funds. In other words, future relations with the EU were taken into account in the final shape of the reform. Kowalczyk has further commented: 'In respect of size they are the counterparts of regions in the countries of EU, and the government and the Sejm had precisely this in mind when they demarcated and assigned tasks to voivodships.'<sup>22</sup>

By the time of our recent round of local elite interviews which were conducted in the period 2001–02 a considerable shift in attitudes towards EU enlargement had taken place at the regional level compared to the



findings from the period 1995–96. The research reveals a more pragmatic attitude to the EU, with much greater emphasis attached to the relationship between the EU and regional policy, fostered by a growing awareness of potential benefits to be derived from access to EU funds (ISPA, Phare 2 in the present, social and economic cohesion funds in the future). When asked to select from a set of preferences towards European integration, our local elite respondents (in contrast to interviewees elsewhere in Eastern Europe) were strongly in favour of conceptions of regional integration (Structural Funds, subsidiarity and Europe of Regions).<sup>23</sup> This issue is discussed further in the second part of the chapter. This shift in vision has led to an organisational adaptation within the administrative regional structures. Special units aimed at fostering cooperation and networks with the EU have been created — in the case of Katowice town structures, in the marshal's office and in the voivode's office.<sup>24</sup>

### **Katowice in Comparative Perspective**

In the final part of this chapter we will present some comparative results from large-scale local elite interviews conducted in five cities across Eastern Europe highlighting in particular attitudes to the European Union across the region and suggesting that the differences in sub-national governance arrangements across the region may be part of the explanation for the variation in outcomes. An examination of elite perceptions at the sub-national level enables us to gauge how far the process of European integration is penetrating to the regional and local levels. This is an important issue for several reasons. Firstly, all the candidate countries have committed themselves to holding referenda on their country's entry into the EU and in the absence of well developed political parties at the regional level, sub-national elites will likely play an important role in mobilising opinion for or against the referendum motion. The role of regional and local elites as gatekeepers and mediators between national elites and grassroots public opinion is enhanced by the organisational weakness of political parties in CEECs, the key conventional mechanism of political communication and control in democracies. Secondly, the CEECs stand to benefit substantially from the EU's structural funds and regional and cohesion policies upon accession to the union, and therefore the capacities, institutional configurations and attitudes which prevail at the sub-national level will have a critical impact on the expenditure of significant EU funds.

Our analysis is drawn from a large-scale cross-national comparative study of local elites in key regional cities in Central and Eastern Europe based on interviews conducted in 1999–2002.<sup>25</sup> The results presented here are based on 363 elites interviews conducted using a standardised question schedule in the following CEEC cities: Pecs in Hungary (74), Maribor in Slovenia (72), Tartu in Estonia (66), Katowice in Poland (75), and Cluj in Romania (76). In addition to collecting key sociological information about our respondents, their activities and networks, the interviews also included a range of questions to test elite opinions on economic and political transition at the national, regional and local level, attitudes to the EU and the enlargement process, and their views on the expansion of NATO.

The research highlights the difference in views between elite members in Katowice and those at equivalent local and regional levels in other CEECs. In general, the ‘regional deficit’ that has characterised the negotiations over the pre-accession requirements, which have been confined to the Commission and governmental elites, is demonstrably reflected in the responses and knowledge of our local elite respondents as regards the European Union. The lack of involvement of sub-national actors in the accession process combined with the failure on the part of national political elites to communicate knowledge of the future benefits of membership to them has meant that levels of knowledge about the European Union are low among local elite members who fail to see its direct relevance for them. This is potentially a matter of serious concern given that various local elite members, depending on their functional positions, will be expected to play a crucial role in assuring implementation and compliance with enlargement objectives — particularly in the areas of regional policy and structural funds, agriculture and the environment. In the case of Katowice, however, this regional gap is far less pronounced suggesting that the devolution of power to the regional level, the advance of the accession process and the stronger sense of regional identity in the area are contributing to a deepening of the process of European integration beyond the capital (the authors recognise that this finding might be more pronounced in Katowice than elsewhere in Poland).

Though there is no area of local or regional government that is not affected by European regulation or conditionality, our research suggests that there is a relatively little engagement with and knowledge about the European Union among local elites in CEECs (except perhaps in the case of Katowice). Our research suggests that social and economic issues linked to the transition process remain the dominant concerns of local elites. EU enlargement has not emerged as a salient issue for the local elites in our research. In Maribor and Cluj none of our local elite interviewees cited EU

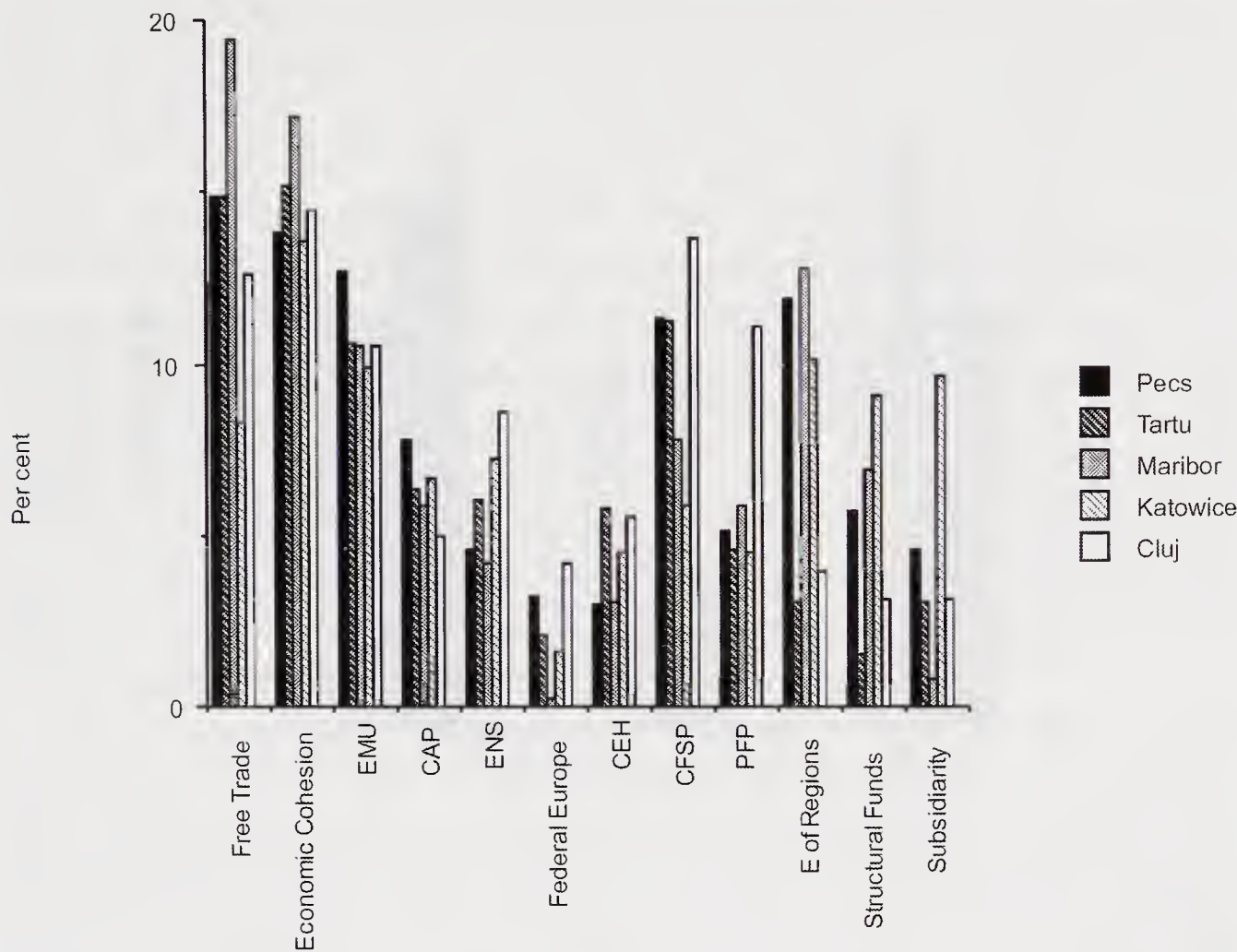


enlargement as an issue of pressing concern in their city. In the case of Pecs only 4 percent considered it to be an important issue and less than 2.5 percent of respondents in both Tartu and Katowice. That sub-national elites are focused on local issues is, of course, not a surprise. The focus on socio-economic factors is understandable given the total transformation of society in the CEECs after 1989. What is surprising, however, is the absence of recognition of the relevance of the enlargement process to the local problems of transition.

Our surveys also sought to gauge which dimensions of European integration predominated in our local elites' understanding of the European Union. Respondents were offered a list of 12 statements relating to integration in Europe and asked to select five among them which best encapsulated what the European Union stood for.<sup>26</sup> These were then analysed along the lines of (i) economic integration, (ii) political integration, (iii) security integration and (iv) regional integration (see Figure 1). Conceptions of economic integration predominated among our respondents' understandings of the European Union, underlying not only that the potential economic benefits of entry into the EU were foremost in our respondents' mind which is not altogether surprising, but again that national-level referents were more important than concepts relating to the regional and local level. Moreover, a vision of the European political integration project was on the whole lacking in our respondents' conceptions of the European Union underscored by the fact that the notion of a federal Europe consistently ranked very low in terms of our local elites' understanding of the nature of the European Union. In many cases, particularly Maribor, Tartu, Cluj, which remain outside Nato, local elites attach importance to the security dimension of the European Union (though even in Pecs the security dimension had a certain resonance). Once more Katowice formed an exceptional case in that unlike our other case study cities regional-level referents — subsidiarity, Europe of the Regions, Structural Funds — were ranked highly by our Polish respondents. Among our other case study cities, in terms of regional referents, only Europe of the Regions received a relatively high ranking from our respondents in Pecs and Maribor.

Most significantly, despite the significant EU investment in funding and organisation in the accession countries since the early 1990s local elites still have a poor or limited knowledge of EU programmes, even when operating in their own areas (see Figure 2).<sup>27</sup> This suggests that there is a major communication and recognition problem with the way that EU programmes are delivered at the local level. One plausible reason for this low recognition of the role of the EU is the design of EU/Phare programmes, which are organised through central ministries, are

**Figure 1 Differing Conceptions of European Integration**

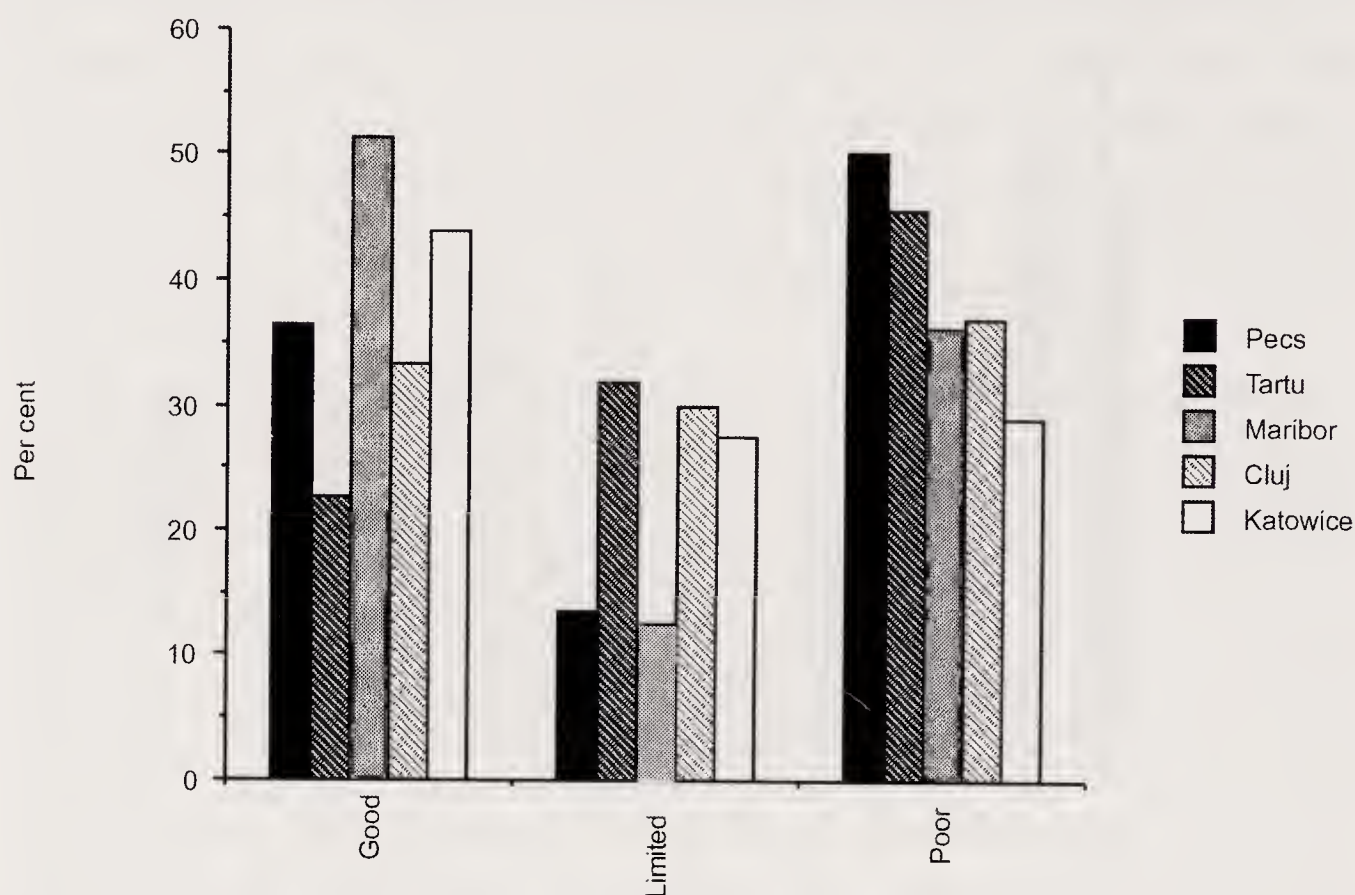


The maximum possible score is 20%. Respondents were asked: Which five of the following phrases best sums up the European Union for you?

Free Trade, Economic Cohesion, EMU, Common Agricultural Policy, Europe of Nation States, Federal Europe, Common European Home, CFSP, Partnership for Peace, Europe of Regions, Structural Funds, Subsidiarity

sectorally driven and rarely delivered on a territorial basis thus replicating some of the tensions over regional policy management identified above in the struggle between national elites and the regional elite in Silesia in the post-communist period and which was also characteristic of the communist era throughout the Central and East European region. EU funding is associated with the spending of national ministers (and by implication — political patronage) who supervise the dispersal to sectors (and indirectly to areas) identified as programme priorities. Moreover, though Phare offices have been opened in the cities involved in our study, these were largely Potemkin-like structures with no permanent personnel present (according to our own experience in the field). The exception to this trend was where EU funds were spent on infrastructural improvements that affected the locale, for example, on new roads or waste water treatment. These were the areas where EU funding



**Figure 2 Knowledge of EU-funded programmes in your city/region**

N = 363

Pecs N = 74

Tartu N = 66

Maribor N = 72

Cluj N = 76

Katowice N = 75

Respondents were asked: Can you name (up to) Three (or more) current EU funded (wholly or partly) projects in your city? (Answers were coded 'good' if respondents were able to name projects and the source of funding; 'poor' if respondents were unable to name any projects or sources of funding; 'limited' if respondents showed knowledge of projects, but were unable to identify the source of funding.)

registered among local elites.<sup>28</sup> The greater knowledge of EU programmes among elites in Katowice may in part be influenced by the administrative decentralisation and the devolution of greater powers to the sub-national levels which has occurred in Poland, where, as discussed above, considerable organisational adaptation has already taken place in the regional governance structures as part of the ongoing accession process. Finally, it is hard to assess accurately whether there is a correlation between the level of assistance that has gone into our case study regions and the level of knowledge about EU programmes in that region as records of EU aid dispersed on a territorial basis are not kept by the Commission.

Further confirmation of the sub-national gap in the enlargement process was evident when we asked local elites about the benefits of EU membership. A widely held perception among some of our local elites, particularly those in Pecs and Tartu is that the potential benefits of membership are greater for the national rather than the local level (see Figure 3). Even our Polish respondents who were more positive about the benefits of EU membership at the local level felt that in general the EU benefited more from its relationship with Poland rather than vice versa (see figure 3a). Conversely local elites in Cluj felt that they benefited more at the local level than the national level from their relationship with the EU. In Cluj the Eurofaculty at the University of Cluj funded in part by EU money is well known in the region and in addition the inhabitants of Cluj are very keen to be seen as 'European' rather than 'Balkan'; in addition, this response may have contained an aspirational element especially given that membership is still a rather distant prospect in Romania.

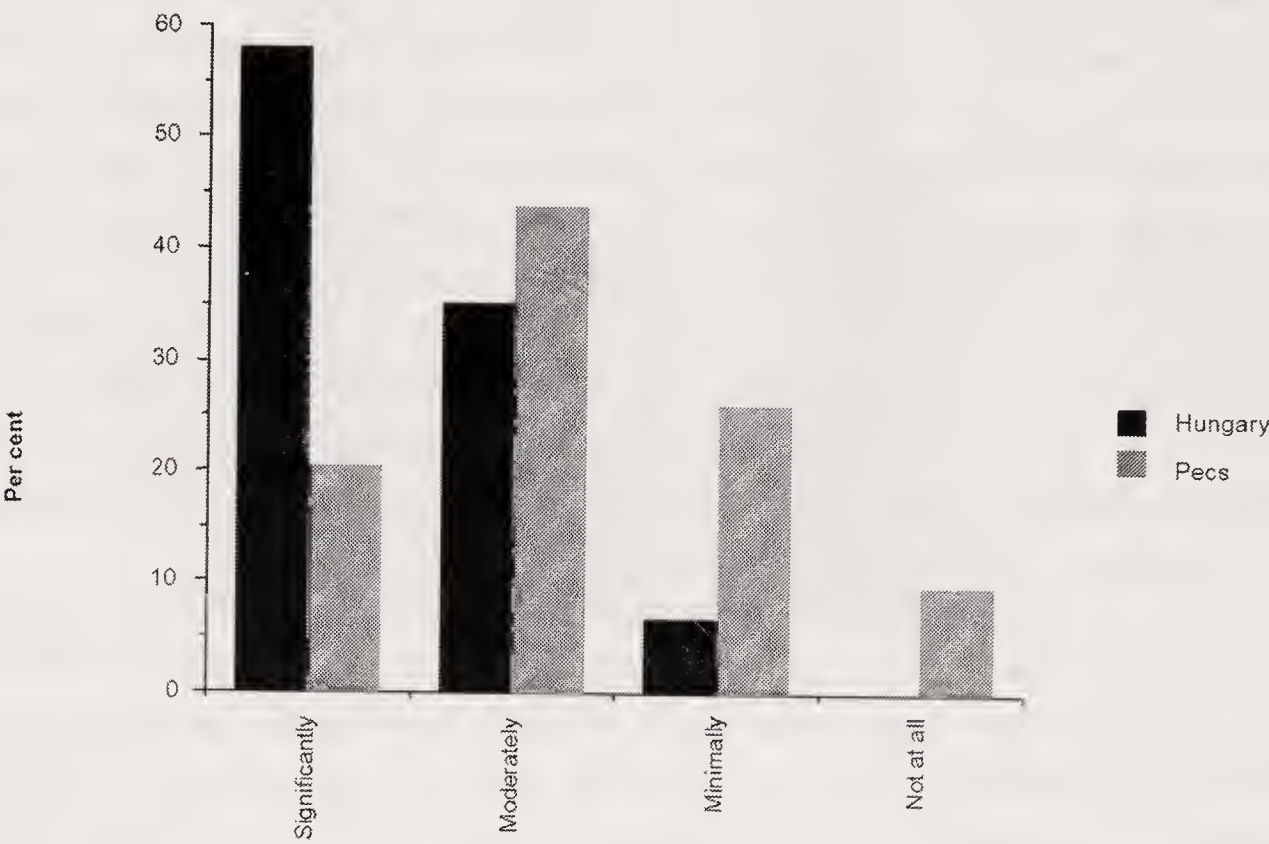
Despite, the lack of knowledge and resulting 'relevance' gap in terms of our local elites' views of the European Union, our research, nonetheless, suggests that local elites in the CEECs are largely pragmatic and therefore potentially open to a greater level of engagement with the process of accession to the European Union which to date has been lacking. Our local elite interviews revealed that they are receptive to changes that will accommodate accession, even such radical proposals as the reform of local administrative boundaries — except in those cases where the potential empowerment of ethnic minorities is an issue (such as in Tartu and Cluj) (see Figure 4). Given that the regional reform had already taken place by the time of our interviews, our respondents in Katowice were asked a different question about the regional reform process, in an attempt to gauge local elites' perceptions of the influence of the European Union in domestic policy decisions. Thus, despite the inherently endogenous nature of the Polish regional reforms of 1998 as discussed earlier, significant numbers of local elites in the city still felt that the design of the reform was influenced by EU conditionalities or at least a combination of Polish priorities and EU conditions though in terms of the outcome of the reform the role of the EU was viewed as considerably less important. (see Figure 5).

It is clear from the data presented above that the decisional calculus of local elites in accession states has been distorted by the focus on managing transition, and as a consequence it has been difficult for them to have a broader vision beyond their own local problems. Given the 'regional gap' in the enlargement process identified above, it would be reasonable to



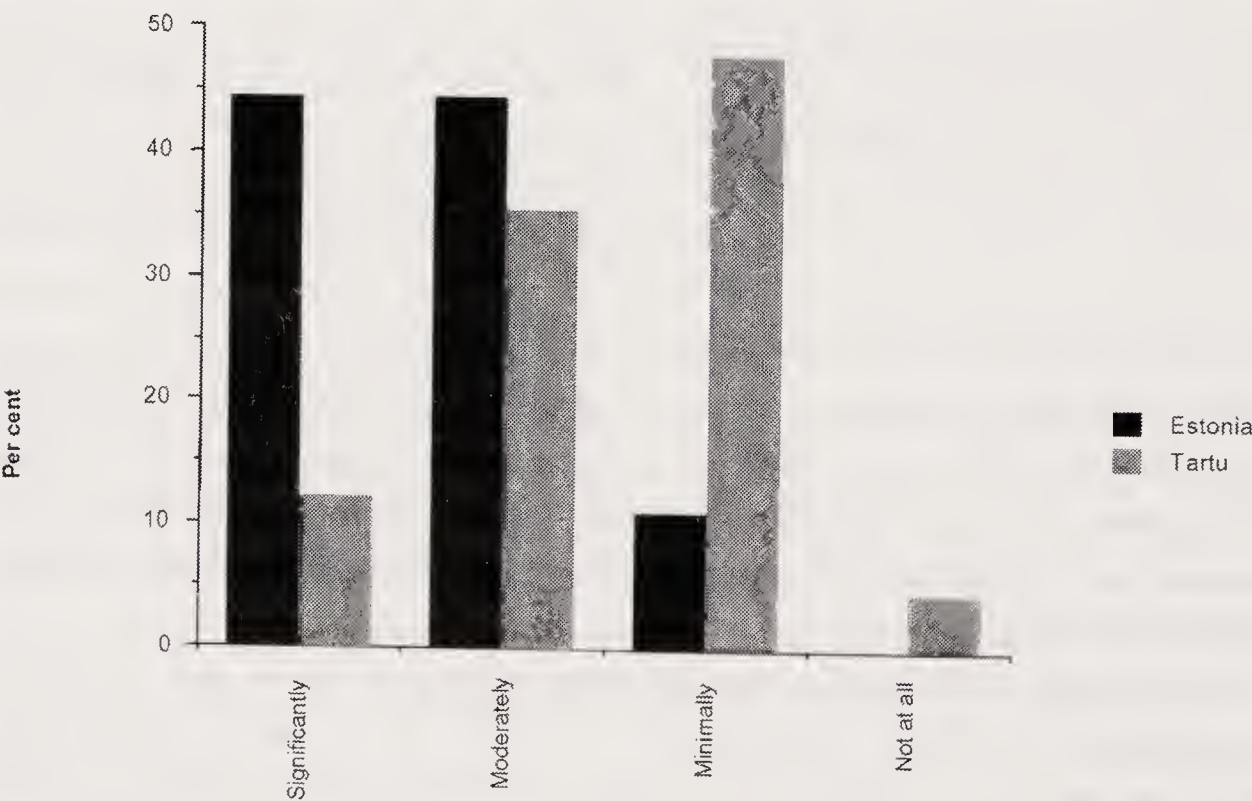
**Figure 3** Perceptions of the Benefits of EU Membership among CEEC Local Elites

Hungary and Pecs



Hungary N = 74

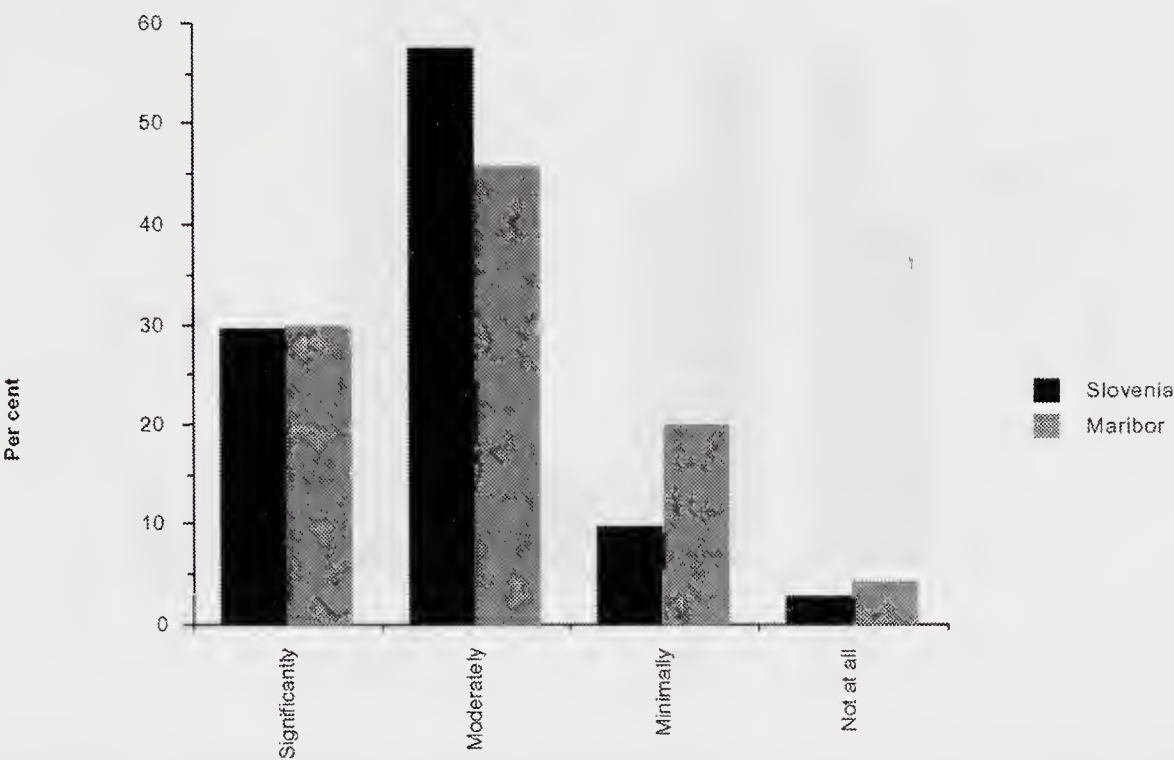
Estonia and Tartu



Estonia N = 66

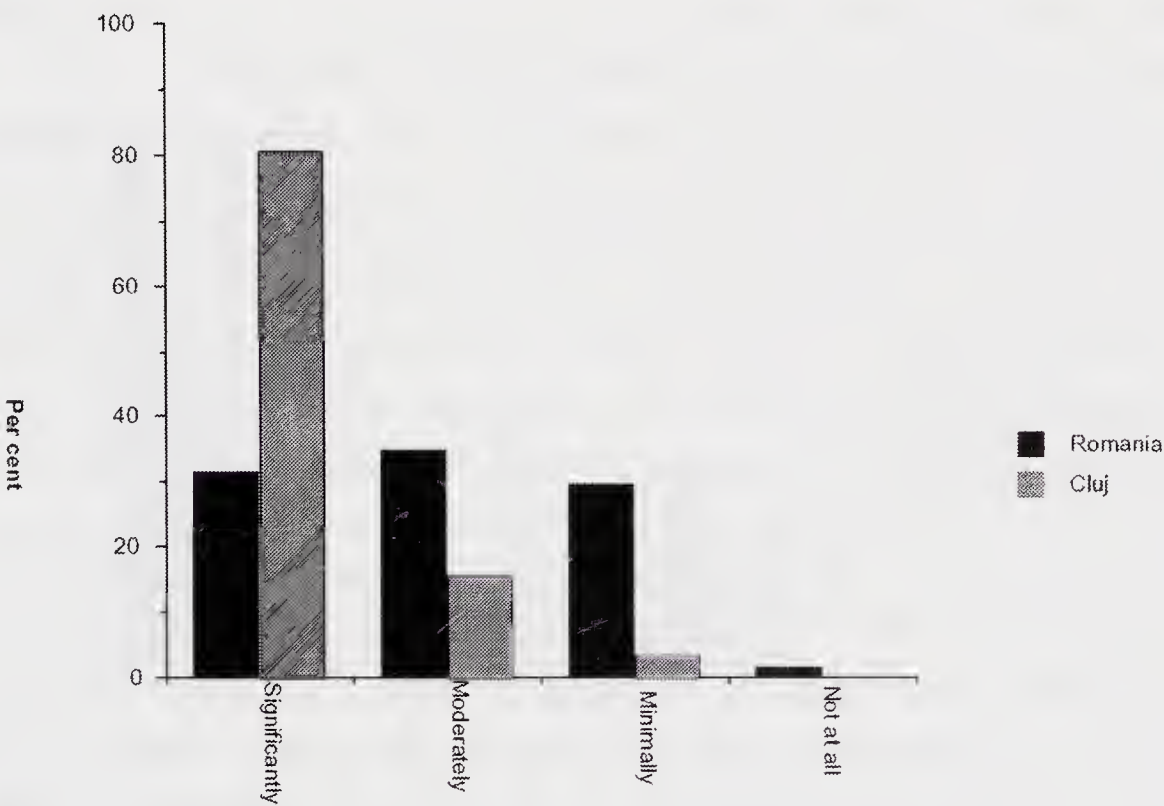
Figure 3 Continued

Slovenia and Maribor



Slovenia N = 72

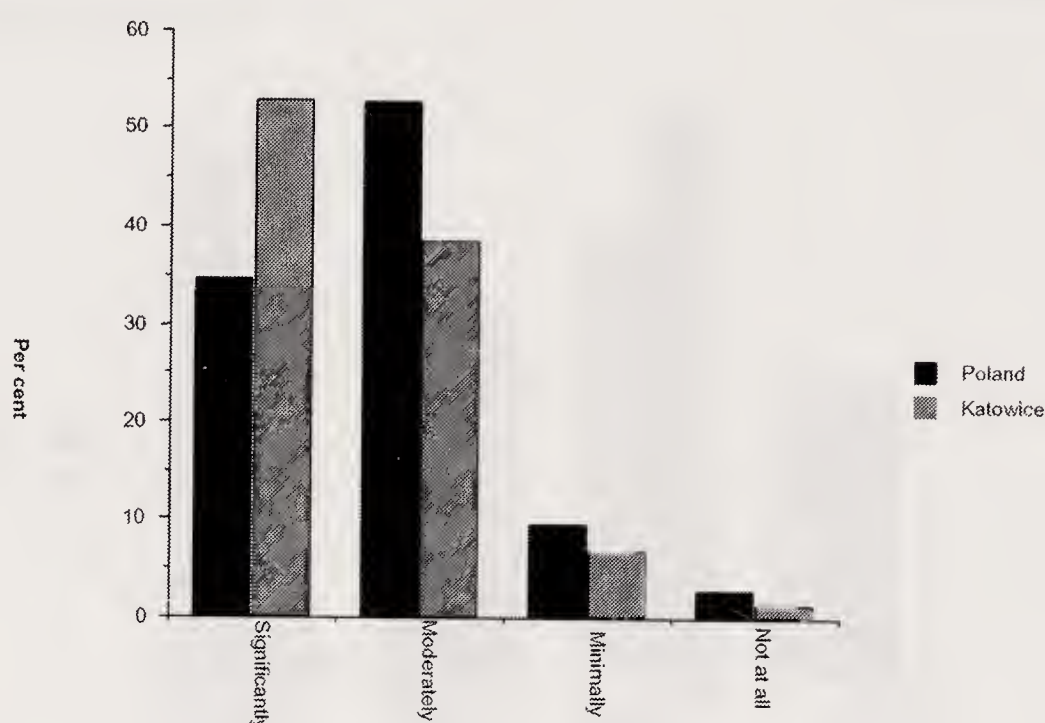
Romania and Cluj



Cluj N = 76



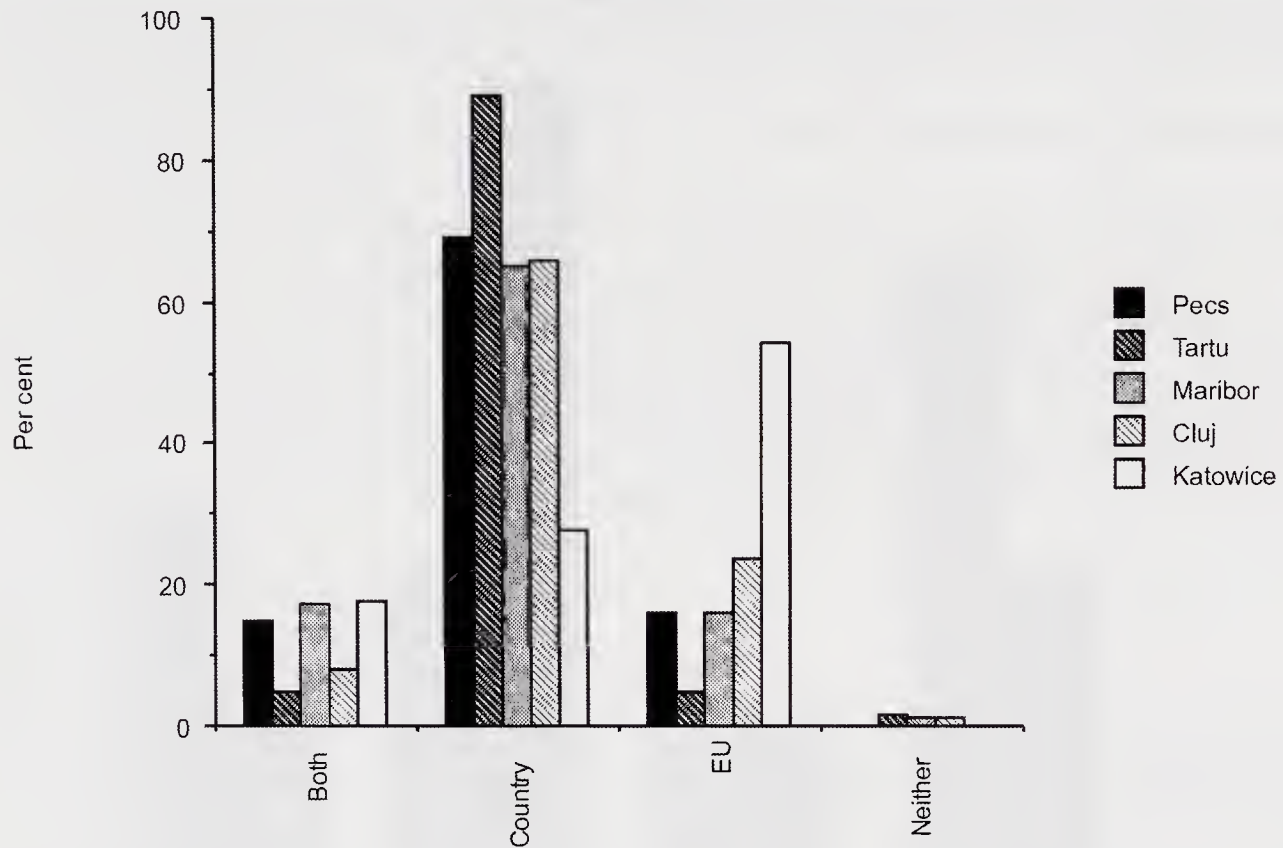
Figure 3 Continued

Poland and Katowice

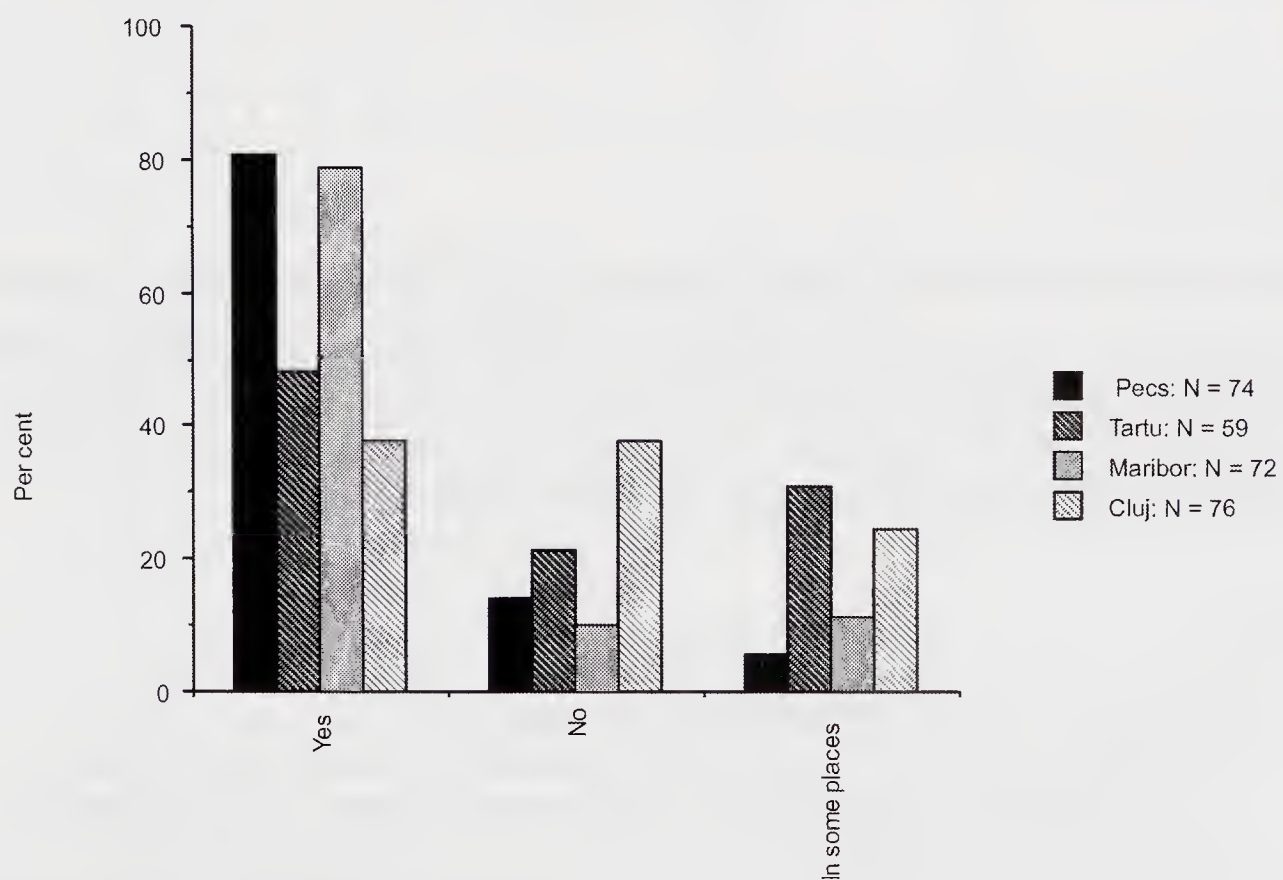
Katowice N = 75

Respondents were asked: How much do you think your country benefits from its relationship with the EU? And how much do you think EU enlargement has benefited your city?

infer that accession to the EU has been widely perceived of as a national project by and for national governments and national elites. This is hardly a project for realising 'deep integration'. It is striking that the one case where the evidence for the so-called 'regional gap' was consistently less convincing was among the local elites in Katowice. This suggests that a democratising regionalisation, that involves significant regional self-government, may *inter alia* foster a commitment to a deepening of the process of EU enlargement at the regional and local levels. This factor could be immensely important given the significant role that these elites will play in mobilising voters for a referendum on membership. The stronger sense of regional identity resulting from the particular historical experience of Katowice and the new Silesian voivodship may have also contributed to the greater engagement with the European enlargement process encountered among local elites in the region, though it is perhaps worth remembering that Cluj in Transylvania in Romania is a region also characterised by a particular historical experience though the regional gap identified in our other case study cities was equally strong here as well. Finally, the fact that our interviews in Katowice were conducted in late

**Figure 3a** Key beneficiary from your country's relationship with EU

Our respondents were asked: Who to you think benefits most our of the relationship between your country and the European Union?

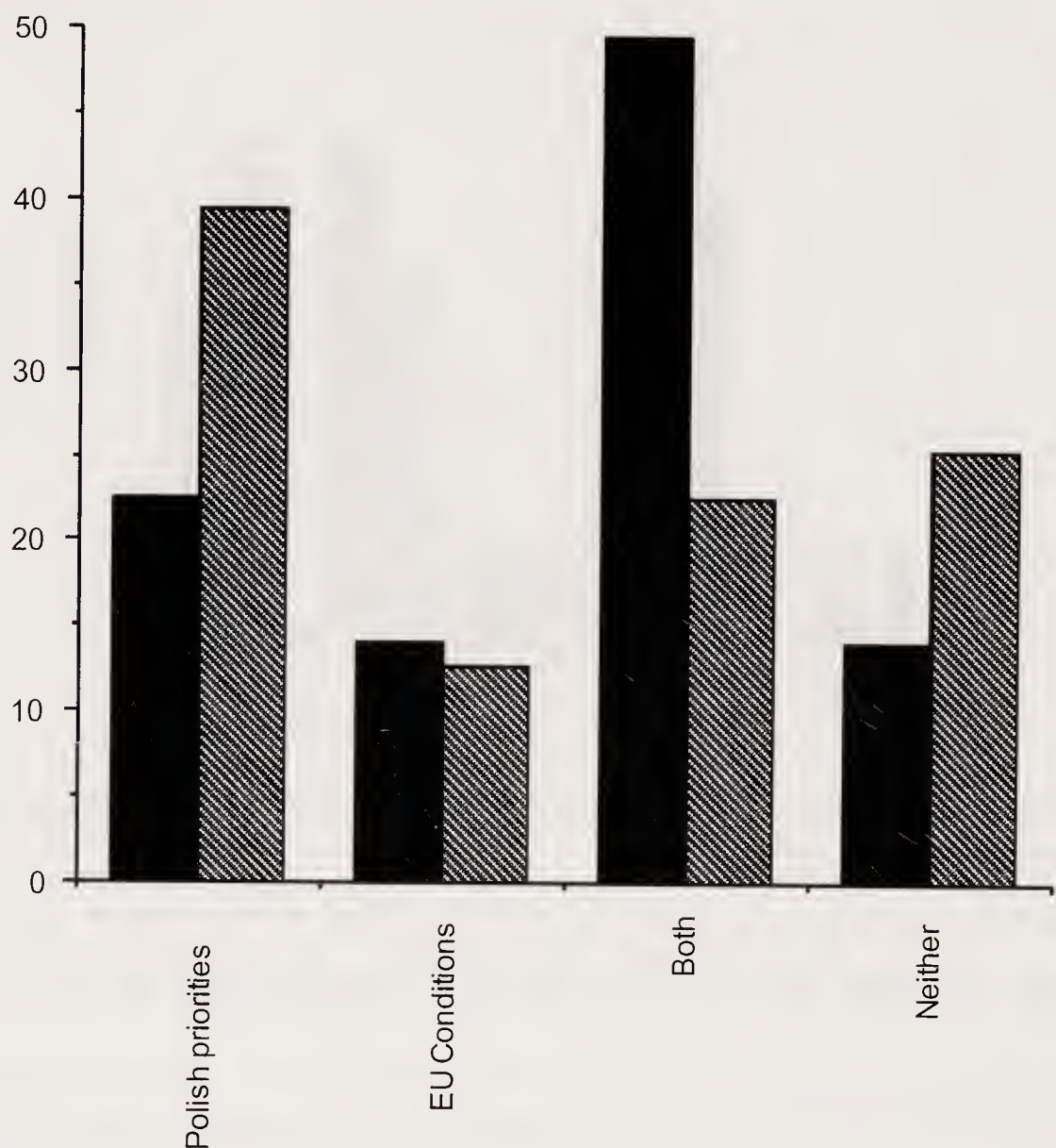
**Figure 4** Attitudes to the Redrawing of Administrative Boundaries

Pec N = 74  
Tartu N = 59

Maribor N = 72  
Clu N = 76



**Figure 5    Accounting for the Design and Outcome of Administrative Reform in Poland**



Katowice N = 75

2001 and early 2002 at a more advanced stage of the negotiations process compared with our other case studies may also have played a role though in the context of the current research project it is impossible to test for this factor quantitatively as the focus in this study was comparative and cross country rather than a longitudinal study of a particular city.

**Notes**

- 1    Hughes, Sasse and Gordon (2002 upcoming).
- 2    This chapter when referring to the region of Silesia denotes the new region of Silesia established following the 1998 regional reforms. It excludes Opole Silesia and Lower Silesia.
- 3    These two sets of interviews were part of separate studies — the first forming part of the doctoral work of Tatiana Majcherkiewicz (2001), and the second set was conducted under the auspices of the ESRC-funded One Europe or

Several? project 'Elites and Institutions in Regional and Local Governance in Central and Eastern Europe'. In addition to Katowice, interviews have also been conducted in Pecs in Hungary, Maribor in Slovenia, Tartu in Estonia and Cluj in Romania.

- 4 Dawson (1999), Gilowska et al. (2001), Kowalczyk (2000), Regulski (1997) and Regulski (2001).
- 5 Nonetheless the question of the regionalisation of Poland was deliberated upon by the first postcommunist government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki.
- 6 It is worth noting here that English and Polish specialists writing on the Polish regionalisation process attach different degrees of importance to the influence of the EU accession process on the 1998 regional reform. See, for example, Dawson (1999), Committee of the Regions (2000), Gilowska et al. (2001) and Regulski (2001). See also discussion below based on our local elite interviews in Katowice.
- 7 Hughes et al. (2001).
- 8 Gilowska et al. (2001).
- 9 See Cybula (1999) and Dawson (1999).
- 10 This takes a particular form in the case of Katowice. Katowice is surrounded by 10 other urban towns — forming one agglomeration — the budget of these 11 towns is approximately 11 times bigger than the regional one — leaving the regional authority which is responsible for coordinating policy at the regional level the weaker partner. In all other regions only the capital has a budget which is equivalent to the regional budget.
- 11 Gorzelak and Jalowiecki (2001).
- 12 Following the decision by King Casimir the Great to sign over Poland's right to Silesia to the Czech King Charles of Luxembourg in 1348, it remained separated from the rest of Poland until 1922.
- 13 Frankiewicz, *Śląsk* (1997), no. 5, pp. 7–8.
- 14 Majcherkiewicz, 2002, 113–118.
- 15 This success was attributed to the rule of the decentralised regional administrative institutions.
- 16 In fact this perception of the autonomy of the inter-war period is partly a myth as though the region was the richest in Poland during this period, the thirties were characterised by high levels of unemployment.
- 17 Gorzelak (2001) has assessed the prospects of different Polish regions in relation to their development potential but his approach totally overlooks the critical role played by regional elites in this process. Thus despite the challenges of regional restructuring, his negative evaluation of Upper Silesia should perhaps be modified due to the strong regional identification and openness towards the EU of its elite.
- 18 95 per cent of Silesians had been included on the German *Volksliste*. This extremely high proportion was in part the result of Nazi policy in the region. Upper Silesia was recognised as a historical German land and an intensive national policy was introduced, resulting in numerous deportations and inducing the majority of inhabitants to declare German nationality.
- 19 The differing attitudes to public service in the region stem in large part from Silesia's experience as part of the Prussian partition which invested people with a respect for the rule of law and efficient bureaucracy and contributed to the emergence of a more developed civil society in the region. See



- Majcherkiewicz (2001), in particular chapters 3 and 5 for more detailed exposition of attitudes to public service in Upper Silesia.
- 20 The Upper Silesian Union was formed with the aim of uniting native Silesians and preserving their culture after the period of Socialist persecution. It soon became one of the most important institutions in the region, especially given the weakness of political parties in the region at that time, and achieved considerable electoral success in the 1990 (147 out of 2,384 seats) and 1994 (150 out of 2,384 seats) local elections.
  - 21 Gorzelak, G. and Jałowiecki, B. (2001).
  - 22 Kowalczyk, (2000) p. 226.
  - 23 For the time being local elite members attach more importance to the region's integration with Europe than to fostering integration within the region among the former voivodships which make up the new region.
  - 24 In the case of Katowice town, a unit for integration with the EU has been set up within the Department of Promotion of Foreign Cooperation; the Department of Investment which is responsible for the preparation of ISPA project has also developed extensive links with EU. In the case of the Marshal's Office, a Unit of EU Cooperation has been set up within the Department of Foreign Cooperation. The voivode's office has been less active in this regard. The Foreign Cooperation Department coordinates the training programmes for civil servants on the question of EU enlargement. However, the Department of Finance which will be responsible for the division of certain pre-accession funds is still rather disengaged from this process. In general though the Marshal's office has already been directly engaged in the preparation and application for EU funds, the voivode's office has not yet been directly involved.
  - 25 We sought equivalence in our cases by using two main criteria in the selection. First, we chose key regional 'second' cities in each country case: Pecs in Hungary, Maribor in Slovenia, and Tartu in Estonia. By opting for the category 'second' cities we aimed to minimise the effects of variation between the cases in terms of size and importance relative to each other. In countries where there was more than one potential option for 'second' city we selected cities that were most geographically oriented to the EU and/or had a reputation for being 'Europeanised' (culturally, economically, politically, historically). Elite members in each city were selected as follows. First, we used positional criteria to identify an initial selection of 20–25 individuals for interviewing, who were drawn from senior elected and appointed officials in the executive and legislative bodies of each city. After this initial selection, we snowballed out to other elite members using reputational criteria, by asking our initial selection of elites to identify other leading individuals. Using this method we interviewed as many as possible of the elite members identified, most of whom came from regional and local government, business, the mass media and, to a lesser extent, the cultural intelligentsia, up to a maximum of 75 in each city.
  - 26 The interviewees were offered the following options: economic cohesion, partnership for peace, subsidiarity, Europe of Nation States, Free Trade, Common Agricultural Policy, Europe of the Regions, Monetary Union, A Federal Europe, Common Foreign and Security Policy, Common European Home and Structural Funds.

- 27 European Commission (2000).
- 28 For example, in Maribor, 17 percent of respondents knew of the waste-water plant that was being built in the city though in fact the financing of this project was arranged by the EBRD and the EU funded only the construction of a water collector outside of the original plant.

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# Regional Party Politics





## Acquiescent Versus Humiliated Periphery. Global Attitudes, Political Ideologies and Economic Interests in Polish Politics

Anna Sosnowska

I make two main claims in this paper. The first one is that the dominant cleavage in Polish politics has continued for the last decade to concern the attitude toward the peripheral position of the country toward the Western (EU and NATO) core. I see the past 12-year evolution of the Polish political scene as the strengthening of two opposite attitudes. They could be called 'the acquiescent periphery' and 'the humiliated periphery' attitude. I argue that the political conflict along this cleavage has had a century-long tradition in Poland just like in other countries of Eastern Europe. This is due to the region's peripheral position in the economic, political and cultural power structure of modern Europe. I develop this in the 'Global attitudes' part of the paper.

The second claim is that the main cleavage has crystallised during the last couple of years (not more than one year before the 2001 parliamentary elections) around more concrete economic interests rather than cultural-political sentiments, as it was during the initial period of post-communism. It has done so either by translating abstract ideological modernisation projects of party headquarters into the interests of regional and local elites as in the case of Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform, PO) and Liga Polskich Rodzin (Union of Polish Families, LPR) or by composing a nationally integrating ideology for diverse group interests as in the case of Samoobrona (Selfdefence, SO). It seems that the 'acquiescent periphery' versus 'humiliated periphery' attitudes have found the strongest support and direct translation into the group interests of what may be called accordingly 'globally playing capitalism' and 'folk capitalism'. I develop this in the 'Economic Interest' part of the paper.



## Background

The scheme for interpretation of the Polish political scene that I propose is based on several assumptions, of which some are more and some — less controversial. They concern the nature of the relationship between society and its politics, democratic politics in the contemporary world in general, and characteristics of Polish society, in particular.

Firstly, I assume that in a political system where government is constructed as a result of popular elections, political parties — if they are to survive and find their stable position on the political scene — have to reflect popular sentiments and/or interests in the form of some attractive ideology. The only logical consequence is that those political parties that fail to appeal to some vital and popular sentiments and interests cease to exist. I treat 'sentiments' as a designation of such a wide spectrum of phenomena as concepts of good society and a good life as well as aesthetic taste or life style. I reserve the term 'interests' to the economic sphere. I treat 'political ideology' as a project consisting of an appeal to both sentiments and interests that does not question the framework of an existing political system but represents its ideal form, proposes its particular (one out of several possible) interpretation and postulates a certain (again, one out of several possible) direction for its further development.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, I assume that, under contemporary conditions, what is most important for party popularity in Poland is an appealing ideology and attractive image rather than party apparatus, its organisational skills and both national and local 'infrastructure'. Formal liberal democracy, popular suffrage, equal access to the means of self-promotion, and the fact that political campaigns take place mainly in the mass-media make a society such as the Polish one quite insensitive to local politics.<sup>2</sup> The most important exception to this rule might be found, however, in the small, rural voting districts during the local elections at the lowest, county level.

Thirdly, I think that what really matters in the regional differentiation of regional and local politics are still rather structural, historically shaped socio-economic factors than formal institutional ones. The fact of the continuously higher voting rate in the national elections than in the local election is the evidence that — so far — what I call the global attitudes and mass media national politics have been socially perceived as more important and more decisive. I think it might be treated as the indicator that Poles identify themselves as the members of the nationally defined groups, that macro-decisions influence their life more than those on the local level. It seems to me that it might be interpreted also as the popular conviction that the area of national politics is the one where a decisive conflict takes

place while local politics is seen as the area either of consensus, management or total corruption. If I am right, local politics would then be perceived as having uncontroversial aims of healthy environment, clean and safe streets, efficient and punctual public transportation and nice public officials. It is probably perceived — to use Hannah Arendt's terminology — as the space of necessity where efficiency and good management counts more than freedom and choice does. Local governments would then need rather 'policy' than 'politics', and rather 'managers' than 'politicians', as Jerzy Regulski, the author of the Polish local government law suggests.<sup>3</sup>

I think that Zbigniew Romaszewski, one of the legends of the post-Solidarity political camp and one of the few of his generation that have remained active in the parliament, is right when he predicts that during the local elections of 2002, these are non-party social activists rather than party members who will win in the smallest voting areas. The fact that the majority rather than proportional system is planned only for the smallest counties will mean that "the representatives elected for their personal qualities and respect (...) will be actually hopeless and have to become clients of the party-run *powiaty* and *województwa*" elected according to the proportional system.<sup>4</sup>

## Global Attitudes

Social Science of the last decade has been very much concerned with globalisation. The debate on its meaning and consequences for the economy, nation states and popular culture seems the most vital and crucial challenge for the theoretical foundations of sociology. That the importance of transnational, global issues such as international migration, cross-border environmental problems or international terrorism has increased in Western European and American politics seems to be a recognised fact.<sup>5</sup> In the light of the institutionalisation of social protest against the global corporate business, economic globalisation should also be considered as one the most important objects of world-wide political controversy.

In non-Western societies and politics, however, problems of beyond-national character had become important long before it was recognised by mainstream Social Science. As post-colonial studies show, attitudes toward the heritage of encounter with the powerful West have marked the modern political ideologies in peripheries — wherever it posed a challenge in military, political, economic or cultural spheres.



## **Poland, Eastern Europe, Europe, the World**

I propose to treat Poland as part of the Eastern European periphery of the globalised world. Its peripheral position in the world economy has been long discussed by historical sociologists inspired by economic history studies as well as dependency theory.<sup>6</sup> Most of them point out that the international and eventually global division of labour within the capitalist world economy has been rather unfavourable to Eastern Europe. Unlike the Northwestern European countries, where capitalist changes took place as early as the late medieval period, Eastern Europe had remained an underdeveloped, rural area of primary good production.

According to this structuralist, long duration approach, Poland has emerged as a peripheral country with backward economy, polarised social structure, and weak central state in the course of the century-long process of unequal exchange with stronger partners. The works of the Polish socio-economic historians Marian Małowist and Witold Kula as well as the Hungarian ones, Ivan Berend and Andrew Janos, imply even that economic backwardness — understood as the level of economic development lower than in most developed countries of the West — has been the most stable element of the Eastern European history.<sup>7</sup> Present economic backwardness and its social and political consequences have thus had the nature of the long duration structure. It then might be treated as “the consequence of the historically accelerating phenomena, lasting much longer than their causes”.<sup>8</sup>

Postcolonial social theory in general and Maria Todorova's and Larry Wolff's analysis of Western discourses on Eastern Europe in particular draw attention to the fact that peripheral regions have been culturally and politically dependent on the ‘gaze of the superior Other’ and classification in the civilization hierarchy constructed by the post-Enlightenment science. This relatively new way of thinking about Eastern Europe has its roots in the tradition of textual analysis of external, hegemonic — colonial, postcolonial or quasi-colonial — discourses on particular cultural, usually geographic or ethnic areas.<sup>9</sup> It is sensitive to symbolic, discursive power relations and observes the production of hegemonic opinions and depiction of some area or people. According to this approach, such entities as ‘Eastern Europe’ are products of the Big Other who remains in possession of discursive technologies to imprison the ‘small other’ in its depiction.

Inspired by these two intellectual traditions, I see Eastern Europe as an area that shares a peripheral position in the economic, political and symbolic power structure with other poor and weak regions. What,

however, makes its self-perception and political imagination different from the post-colonial societies are the century-long non-colonial links to the West — belief in cultural affiliation and debated awareness of its inferior position as well as the collective memory of several (not just the newest) failures to catch up.

I think then that to understand the Polish — like other non-Western — political scene one needs to recognise that the main socio-political cleavages are substantially different from conservative/liberal/social-democratic or Left and Right. I consider the latter characteristic exclusive to the modern Western world where these ideologies were shaped in the course of the historical, social process. No matter whether such distinctions still make sense in the Western world itself, it should be accepted that in non-Western world, the labels of 'liberalism' or 'socialism' have been perceived, accepted or rejected not just as political ideologies but Western political ones. Decisive modern social transformations that produced these ideologies have not been part of the non-Western experience. Nowhere outside the West was there a constitutional reaction to the absolutist monarchy, post-Reformation religious wars, anti-feudal social revolutions whose expression was the liberal ideology. Only in Western Europe — not even in the US, social changes resulted from capitalist growth, social differentiation, and industrialisation were met with the socialist — Marxist and social-democratic — ideological response. Like in other parts of the non-Western world, the Eastern European political ideologies have been built since at least the nineteenth century in the response to the fact that the country was politically dependent on the Great Powers and/or economically underdeveloped.

Due to the geographical proximity and traditional cultural links, however, modern Eastern European political ideologies, especially of those today nations that lived during the nineteenth century within the Hapsburg and Russian Empires, have been shaped under the stronger influence of the Western European ideologies than in other peripheral regions. In short, they have been shaped in response to those countries' peripheral status within the dominant systems of reference: the European power system, the world capitalist system, the Soviet Bloc, the Western and global cultural system, but with some sense of belonging to the Western framework of political ideals.

Political ideologies in Eastern Europe could be seen as the effect of merged elements of three trends: modern Western political tendencies, elements typically peripheral and historically specific local (national, regional) elements. What has complicated the Eastern European political landscape even more, has been the 'civilizational confusion'. Its best



expression was the debate between *zapadniki* (occidentalists), *slavofili* (slavophiles) and *narodniki* (populists) in nineteenth century Russia. Jerzy Jedlicki, a Polish historian of ideas, claims that the dilemma of not only whether to go with or against the West but also whether modern Western civilisation was their own has been “to some degree (...) omnipresent through East-Central Europe” in the nineteenth century intellectual discourse.<sup>10</sup> The dilemma has resulted mainly from the huge gap between the tiny, educated elites and native masses. “The intellectual elites of every East European country undoubtedly belong to the all-European family, even if they were frequently treated as poor cousins and often felt that they were. But what about their native countries, where did these belong?” has been the question causing conflict of solidarity — with the local population or with internalised Western political imagination.

### Political Ideologies

In peripheral countries, the main ideological conflict can be summarised as one between the ‘acquiescent periphery’ attitude and ‘humiliated, rebellious periphery’ attitude. It runs between the competing attitudes toward the Western models of historical social development and ideas of how the country should develop in the situation of its backward economy and peripheral status. Ideologies proposed by the political elites have contained the elements of liberal, conservative, socialist and postmodern world views intermixed both with one another and the specific peripheral projects of going ‘with’ or ‘against’ the West.

Post-communist Poland, like other Eastern European countries could be seen as a nation-state whose significant portion of the cultural and political elite claimed that the country belonged to Europe on the cultural basis, as an entity opposed to ‘the East’, ‘Orient’, ‘Orthodox world’, ‘wildness of Asia’ or area of ‘Byzantine legacy of Soviet communism’. At the same time, that Poland belonged to ‘Europe’ or ‘the West’ was externally questioned on the economic, political or — rather rarely — cultural basis. The main political debate in the 90s has concerned mostly the consequences of being ‘the European’, including the meaning of being so.

I do not say that the dimensions of the political conflict popularly accepted by sociologists such as attitude toward the free market or the institutional presence of the Roman Catholic Church or toward the communist heritage are not important at all.<sup>11</sup> I argue, however, that the picture coming out of such analysis is wrong as it treats the nation-state society as a closed economic and cultural system and thus is not able to discover the most important and vital conflicts. And these, it seems to me,

concern the desired position of the country in the world-system — the world living under conditions of the global, capitalist economy as well as the paths that the country should follow to reach the desired position.

Consequently, I think that one of the most important dimensions of the post-1989 political scene has been constructed around the ‘global political attitudes’. I mean by this term political attitudes toward consequences of both economic globalisation and the global political and cultural hierarchy shaped by the modern history that the country has had to deal with.

## 1989–2000

The initial period of post-communism could be seen as the one when the main political struggle concerned what was worthy to struggle about. Its aim was the imposition of dominant cleavages that is of problems that should be considered of the main importance to the public.

The expectation of most of the Solidarity intellectual elite in the years after the revolution of 1989 was that the main emerging political cleavage should run along the liberal *laissez-faire* –social democratic line characteristic of the Western political scene. It seems that the first conflict within the Solidarity elite — between President Lech Wałęsa and the Civic Parliamentary Club led by Bronisław Geremek — could be described as the clash between those who opted for the ‘normalisation’ of the political scene and imitation of the Western political cleavages with those ready for experiment and shaping the political discourse around local, sometimes temporary problems of e.g. decommunisation. The essence of conflict could be described as the attitude toward the imagined heritage of Western liberal democracy and *Rechtstaat*. This was the first, quite unarticulated version of the post-communist conflict between the humiliated and acquiescent periphery. Despite the difference as to how the former communist elite should be treated by law, the post-Solidarity camp kept questioning the modernising character of the real-socialist period.

The public debate was set mostly on the symbolic level and concerned the definition of the past and future relations between Poland and Europe or the West. The main cleavage: acquiescent periphery versus humiliated periphery was expressed in terms of culture and history. What structured Polish, like other East European, national discourse was its focus on the ‘European’ question, its identity as ‘Europeans’. One could observe this main — as I think — cleavage in how the parties were running their political campaigns rather than in what they were literally saying. Such things as image, clothes the politicians were wearing, language they were using, political concepts they were using were crucial for identification of what



has become crystallised during the period of the final stage of the EU accession negotiations as an acquiescent European periphery and humiliated, rebellious one.

The two groups that were described as the 'post-communist parties' shared the belief that the 1945–1989 period had brought substantial social progress. Despite this similarity, the political worlds of these parties were significantly different. *Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej* (Union of Democratic Left, SLD) and Polish Peasant Party (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*, PSL) adopted different attitudes toward the Western ideological heritage. Turned into Social Democratic Party and operating within the SLD coalition, the main post-communist party believed that the appeal to the European political tradition could be the most effective source of legitimisation. This political and mental shift was probably the effect of 'internal agitation' by the party elite. It was a difficult task as the SLD elites have no traditional intelligentsia background. They rather represented the mentality of the upwardly social mobility of real socialism — folk anti-clericalism mixed with the Enlightenment contempt for religion inherited from the party propaganda, a tendency to submission toward authority mixed with a high level of political pragmatism and cynicism.<sup>12</sup> It seems that already in the early 90s, thanks to president-to-be Aleksander Kwaśniewski, the SLD managed to monopolise the image of being a 'modern' party — well organised, pragmatic and young. It can be considered a paradox after 45 years of its being in power but it succeeded in juxtaposing itself to the image of other parties — patronising, preaching, composed of the respected old appealing to values, ethos, tradition, sentiments, etc.

The SLD made an impression of being composed of and appealing to the Enlightenment, anti-Romantic electorate — rational, interested in economic success, welfare, and consumption, liberal in life-style (including the concept of family and sexual life), and secularised but interested in consumer and ritual ways of celebrating religious holidays. The SLD appeared also to be much more responsive to the contemporary mass-media political techniques as well as textile, linguistic and body language fashions. It presented itself as being *au vogue* and Westernised without peripheral complexes.

The identity of the PSL electorate, on the other hand, was built in the 90s around the suspicion toward what might be called 'modern rationality' and liberalism. It questioned liberal political postulates such as individualism, breaking traditional social ties, the cult of trade as well as social and geographical mobility. It certainly rejected the liberal postulate of liberation from that traditional and gave an advantage to what was created and

constructed. Such a conservative critique of liberalism was accompanied by social-democratic postulates: preventing economic differentiation, promoting civilisational growth and social security. The PSL ideology also contained some postmodern and postindustrial critiques of industrial society as a soulless, oppressive, alienating and environment-damaging machine. Like Akcja Wyborcza 'Solidarność' (Election Action 'Solidarity', AWS), it did not accept the peripheral status of the country in its version, painful to the rural electorate.

The weakness of Polish political groups that identify themselves as 'the Right' comes from the fact that their leaders appeal to different concepts of the Right known both in the West and peripheral countries of the past as well as the present. AWS, the biggest failure of the Polish political scene of 2001, was made up of several political circles, very different in their notion of what it meant to represent the Right. The rightist character of most of these groups has been the mixture of two main elements composed in different degrees.

The first element of the Polish Right of the 90s was connected with the Western conservative tradition as it expressed the post-revolutionary nostalgia for the world existing before the modern transformation started. Appeals to strong local, 'natural' and family ties; care for the preservation of religious and national roots; resistance to such liberal values as secular universalism, trust in progress, rationalism as the main and valuable characteristic of human nature and, on the other hand, suspicion toward free market and *homo economicus* are the elements of nineteenth century conservatism in its struggle with liberalism. Such an attitude was common ground for both AWS and peasant parties, including the post-communist PSL. The strong resonance of classical conservative elements should be understood in the historical circumstances — the liberal principles of politics and social life have never had a chance to be widely accepted in Eastern Europe and have no social base in Poland. A high percentage of the rural population, strong sentiment for the eighteenth century *respublica* of nobility, domination of the folk religiosity and respect for traditional authorities make the ground for a classical conservative ideological component.

Another important ideological ingredient of the Polish rightist sentiment is the charismatic and/or populist Right of the modernising periphery under conditions of fear from both liberalism and radical leftist ideologies, and disagreement for one's own country peripheral position. In the twentieth century the countries of Latin America, Southern and Central Europe, the postcolonial countries of Asia and Africa as well as Europe today, do not question modernity and capitalism but express the will that they should



work to one's own advantage. That type of rightist ideology is more modern — its rejection of liberalism is not nostalgic but future oriented and does not refer to the internal social and political organisation only. It accepts modern political institutions of the nation state, political parties and mass political participation. It has appeared in countries of peripheries already going through the process of modernisation, with a high degree of social awareness of the global market rules, conscious of their peripheral status and social costs of capitalist development. This type of the rightist ideology appeals to the poor and deprived masses rather than to the elite as classical conservatism does. That the rightist coalition of AWS was built around and under the leadership of the 'Solidarity' trade union seems to fit the scheme — it represented the working class and state-employed intelligentsia that economically lost in the economy open to world competition. I think that the AWS coalition won the 1997 parliamentary election on the appeal to this second type of rightist sentiment and interest with only little reference to the conservative one. What was symptomatic was that it made no appeal to the Rightist ideology as it was understood in either European countries or the US at the moment — economic neoliberalism. That is why the AWS was joint and/or accepted by none of the liberal or libertarian or conservative liberal political groups. To such people as neoliberal Leszek Balcerowicz, Donald Tusk or Janusz Korwin Mikke, AWS — with its appeal to collective, mass pride and responsibility for the community wider than family and voluntary associations — represented ideological mess and even 'socialism as such'. Neither did the ideological message of AWS contain the elements of another peripheral, mostly Latin American rightist tradition, namely that of oligarchy or dictatorship ruling with the military or economic support of a Great Power against popular sentiments.

Most groups within AWS accepted some dimension of a modern Western concept of politics such as nation-state, parliamentarianism, seeking legitimacy in the rule of law, economic growth and popular welfare. At the same time, many of them, including the 'Solidarity' trade union leadership as well as Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe (Christian-National Union, ZChN), appealed to sentiments and interests marginalised by the contemporary Western concept of politics and society. They expressed their sense of social and cultural marginalisation as well as economic peripheral status in the 'promised land' of EU in terms of national pride and religious faith. Reluctance to the secular character of the state, so much visible in the mid-90s during the public debate over the Constitution preamble and abortion law, ambivalence toward the moral stand of contemporary Europe resulted, I believe, rather from the

humiliated-peripheral care for the national cultural cohesion rather than from universal ethics.<sup>13</sup>

Unia Wolności (Union of Liberty, UW) had a very different attitude toward the Western European discussion over the liberal concept of politics and social life. It was full acceptance and internalisation accompanied at the same time by the lack of confidence in the immediate compatibility of the people with this project. UW solved its identity conflict in favour of elitist liberalism against the logic of democratic legitimisation. As Polish sociologist, Ireneusz Krzemiński writes on the attitude of the first post-1989 governments led by the future Unia Wolności leaders: “Belief in necessity of reforms over the people’s head, without starting the public discussion was strengthened by faith in the dogmatically treated liberal philosophy”.<sup>14</sup>

The main line of conflict in the public debate that SLD, on the one hand, and AWS, on the other succeeded in constructing in the mid-90s concerned the attitude toward the Western liberal concept of politics as the area of earthly, secular events connected with the functioning of the secular state.<sup>15</sup> Another important difference between the two camps was the attitude toward the country’s peripheral status, both cultural and political as well as consumer, technocratic and libertarian dimensions of Western postmodernity.

During the optimistic days of high economic growth rate and upcoming NATO admission, the acknowledgement of the peripheral status could be detected more easily within the discourse proposed by AWS and PSL, parties of the modestly — as seen from today’s perspective — rebellious periphery, seeking the popular economic improvement and recognition in the West. I decided to call this attitude ‘humiliated periphery’ both despite and because of the rhetoric of the Polish glorious historical traditions, national pride, old European, Christian identity, patriotism, love of independence and sovereignty. These are the elements of the rejection of a peripheral status which is considered humiliated. SLD and UW represented the side of acquiescent periphery. Both groups opted for the economic development by invitation toward the global capital, believed the dependent-development within the country peripheral status was the most promising option, and accepted the liberal, secular concept of politics.

## 2000–2002

During the first post-communist decade one could observe the increasing recognition by the political elites that parties built around socio-economic



cleavages known from Western European political scenes have no public resonance in Eastern Europe. By the end of the 90s the political conflict ran only latently between pro-globalisation and anti-globalisation attitudes; all significant political actors were declaratively pro-NATO and pro-EU integration.

The crucial political scene change took place in 2001. The new significant political parties — Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform, PO), Samoobrona (Self-Defense, SO) and Liga Polskich Rodzin (League of Polish Families, LPR) should be interpreted as the attempt of a more adequate, socially appealing expression of these abstract, previously often latent, global attitudes.

Now, what has been latent took the form of pro- and anti-European Union integration options. What had to be detected and predicted with the use of social theory, now can be observed by a pro-European journalist. One can find the following description in a newspaper article: “The present integration discussion in Poland is unintentionally focused on the models of membership but on the model of satellitship. (...) According to what euro-enthusiasts say, the future of Poland will depend not on our effort, work and struggle for the national interest but on totally external factors — mostly on the inevitable laws of history which have found their emanation in the structures of EU. (...) Euro-sceptics, on the other hand, claim that no matter what circumstances, we have nothing to find in the European salons”.<sup>16</sup>

At the moment, the main political cleavage runs between PO and SLDj, on the one hand, and SO and LPR, on the other. Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice, PiS) and PSL form the centre. Unlike Tomasz Żukowski, the well-known interpreter of the Polish political scene, I think the political scene is stable and even more stable than it was during the second half of the previous parliamentary term.<sup>17</sup> It is so in the sense that it now better represents popular sentiments and interests. AWS that was elected as the representative of the humiliated periphery did not play the role well. Its failure is also connected with the marginalisation of the public industrial sector interests. That part of the electorate has been seeking or waiting for its representation since 1989 and the line of connection between the potential political elite and the popular attitudes has been much more difficult than for the opposite side of the spectrum.

## **Economic Interests**

The global attitudes of the acquiescent and humiliated periphery consist, as I said, of attitudes toward both economic and cultural-political

globalisation. The attitude toward the former, that is politically uncontrolled flow of capital, disparity between a fragmented political system of the nation states, on the one hand and transnational, global economic system, on the other, are correlated with economic interests that can be described accordingly as 'globally playing capitalism' and 'folk capitalism'.

Since the post-communist opening of the economy toward the world market, the 'globally playing capitalism' has been represented in Poland either by foreign corporate capitalism or political capitalism. The latter resulted from the 'structural arrangement' between first post-communist *nomenklatura* and then other ruling elites and the state.<sup>18</sup> This 'structural arrangement', as Polish sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis calls it, has taken the form of, for example, privatisation, state concessions and supply for the state demand, and privileged access to information.<sup>19</sup> The representatives of local 'capital empires' try to make the distinction, and even opposition, between themselves and foreign capital with which they have to compete on the local market and could compete on the global scene. Janusz Lewandowski calls the candidates for local 'capital empires' makers the 'children of Balcerowicz'.<sup>20</sup>

The same person defines the opposite group as those who 'were unable to pay back the credits', pointing at the electorate of SO, and those who are 'afraid of competition with EU', indicating the supporters of LPR. Andrzej Lepper, leader of SO and Zygmunt Wrzodak of Liga Polskich Rodzin, call the same group 'victims of Balcerowicz', those who 'were robbed by Balcerowicz financial politics' that is the credit conditions. Both Lewandowski and the representatives of SO and LPR would mention the continuity between the former 'prywaciarze', owners of small businesses (including farmers) during the socialist times, on the one hand, and farmers and nowadays 'folk capitalism', on the other. Only the former would stress their past propensity to adapt to the communist order while the latter would emphasise the heroic struggle that these *petit bourgeois* have had to undertake with both communist and neo-liberal economic regimes.<sup>21</sup>

The distinction I propose here corresponds to the opposition that Braudel makes between 'market' and 'capitalism'. The former would be close to the model of 'perfect competition' where profit and capital accumulation is slow, business risk high and competition severe, and price is a result of the interplay between supply and demand. Nowadays, folk capitalism operates in low-profit sectors such as agriculture, food trade, textile industry. This form of economic activity operates almost exclusively on



the local, at best national market. It is relatively easy to be controlled by the local or national governments.

‘Capitalism’, on the other hand, operates on the principle of oligopoly or monopoly, not market and competition. The entrance costs into sectors where capitalism operates are high, large capital is needed to set the business. Braudel’s ‘capitalism’ is also characterised by high profit and fast capital accumulation. Contemporary capitalism operates on the global scale. The model sector of its functioning is a financial one. It is much less likely to be politically controlled especially by nation-states.

It seems that the conflict of interest between folk and globally operating capitalism is world-wide, not specific to the peripheral countries. In the centre there is also a conflict between corporate and small businesses. In the periphery, however, it intersects with other lines of conflict, mostly cultural. In the periphery, the conflict is more severe, because the ‘global’ means there usually ‘foreign’ as the members of the local, national communities do not form the global corporations. The highest they can reach in this global corporations’ hierarchy is to be their employees and representatives. In the peripheral societies, the social-economic conflict, seeking its expression in the political scene runs then between foreign corporate employees and *petit bourgeois* — small owners and their employees.<sup>22</sup>

It seems that all these lead to the decrease of the importance of the classical employee-employers cleavage of social divisions, so characteristic of the classical Western modernity. The main line of conflict politically marginalises the state-owned companies working class, especially that they represent the ‘declining sectors’ of mining, steeling and military industry which have been the traditional base for the trade unions.

### *Options for further development*

It seems that the global attitudes will shape political cleavages in the future as well, also after the EU accession. Global issues such as the attitude toward a global capital or international migrations will increase in importance, and Poland’s political scene will remain peripheral in character as foreign investment seeker and migrants’ sender.

Donald Tusk, the leader of PO, is certainly right when he says that after “the EU integration referendum, other lines of political division will appear in Polish politics”, and pro- or anti-European cleavage will decline in importance after the integration.<sup>23</sup> If the leaders of PO — Lewandowski and Tusk — are right in their predictions about the positive effect of EU integration for Polish economy, about aspirations of its own electorate and

capabilities of the Polish business, PO will continue to represent the globally playing capitalism — newly created Polish ‘capital empires’ able to compete in the global market. The political scene will become more similar to that of Western Europe, and the national/ethnic cleavage will not intersect with the global versus folk capitalism one to the degree it does now.

## Notes

- 1 I use the term ‘political ideology’ in the sense given to it by K. Mannheim. This is an image of socio-political order which is transcendent toward reality and neither can be realised within the given political order nor aim at changing it. Ideology is a mixture of epistemological, axiological and emotional elements. It represents the interpretations of the desired state of reality without questioning the foundation of an existing order. Mannheim makes a distinction between ‘ideology’ and ‘utopia’ — the latter being a project transcendent toward reality that might be realised only under condition of radical change. K. Mannheim, *Ideologie und Utopie*, Frankfurt a/Mein, 1952.
- 2 See the debate organised by the ‘Znak’ monthly titled ‘Ucieczka od wolności? Polacy kontra polityka’ (‘Escape from Freedom? Poles contra Politics’) composed of the following articles: I. Krzemiński, *W szponach złej polityki* (In Pinch of Evil Politics), P. Śpiewak, *Apolityczna wolność* (Apolitical Freedom), T. Szawiel, *Obywatel — mój bliźni* (Citizen — My Neighbor), and the discussion: *Młodzi to poprawią?* (Will the Young Make It Up?), “Znak” 6/2002.
- 3 J. Regulski, *Polityk czy menedżer* (Politician or manager), “Rzeczpospolita”, February 9, 2000.
- 4 Z. Romaszewski, *Samorząd 2002 — obywatelski czy partyjny?* (Local government 2002 — civic- or party-oriented?), “Rzeczpospolita”, March 12, 2002. *Powiat* is the second and *województwo* is the third, the highest level of the territorial division of Poland.
- 5 M. Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture, Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, London: Sage Publications, 1990, R. Robertson, *Globalization. Social Theory and Global Culture*, London: Sage Publications, 1992.
- 6 I write more about this in A. Sosnowska, *Searching for a Theoretical Framework for Eastern Europe: Interpretations in Social theory*, “Sisyphus” vol. 12, 1999, *ibid.* *Teorie zmiany i rozwoju społecznego a zmiany w Europie Wschodniej po 1989 roku. O potrzebie perspektywy globalnej*, “Kultura i Społeczeństwo” no. 1, 1998, *ibid.* *The Post-Communist Transformation and Historical Sociology*. A review of J. Staniszkis, *Post-communism. The Emerging Enigma*, “Polish Sociological Review”, no 3, 2001. *ibid.* *Ku historycznej socjologii zacofania. ‘Debata wschodnioeuropejska’ w polskiej historiografii społeczno-gospodarczej 1947–1994*, doctoral dissertation, manuscript. Anderson P., *The Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London: NLB 1974, I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I*, New York: Academic Press, 1974, *ibid.* *The Capitalist World-Economy*, Cambridge Un. Press/ Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1979, Berend I., Ránki G.,



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- 7 M. Małowist, *Wschód a Zachód*, W. Kula, *Zacofanie gospodarcze w perspektywie historycznej (Economic Backwardness in the Historical Perspective)* in: *ibid.*, *Historia, zacofanie, rozwój*.
  - 8 M. Kula, *Kategoria rozumowania historyków: długie trwanie*, “Kultura i Społeczeństwo” no 4, 2000, p. 71.
  - 9 I write more about this in: A. Sosnowska, *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia a orientalizm*, “Studia Socjologiczne” no 2, 1999. The funding work of this type of reflection is Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin, 1978. About Eastern Europe, including Poland: L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford Un. Press, 1994, M. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford Un. Press, 1997.
  - 10 J. Jedlicki, *The Revolution of 1989: The Unbearable Burden of History*, “Problems of Communism” July–Aug 1990, p. 42.
  - 11 Żukowski T., *Sześć lat w teatrze demokracji. Ewolucja polskiej sceny politycznej od wiosny 1989 do wiosny 1995 r. (Six Years in the Theater of Democracy. Evolution of the Polish Political Scene from Spring 1989 to Spring 1995)* in: M. Marody, E. Gucwa-Leśny (red.), *Podstawy życia społecznego w Polsce*, Warszawa: ISS UW, 1996.
  - 12 I. Krzemiński, *ibid.*, p. 19–22.
  - 13 Slogans on the hugest pro-life manifestation in Poland in October 1996 referred rather to the cohesion and power of the national group that, while allowing abortion, lose its potential members than universal moral values. For a similar but even more dramatic character of the abortion law debate in the war-engaged Croatia of the early 90s see S. Žizek, *Eastern European Liberalism and Its Discontents*, “New German Critique”, 57/1992.
  - 14 I. Krzemiński, *ibid.*, s. 18.
  - 15 I write about the evolution of the Polish political scene in 1989–1997 in terms of ‘acquiescent’ and ‘humiliated periphery’ in A. Sosnowska, *Tu, Tam — pomieszanie*, “Studia Socjologiczne” no 4, 1997.

- 16 K. Rak, *Jak gęś z prosięciem* (*Like a goose with a pig*), "Życie", April 7, 2002.
- 17 *Samochód w poślizgu* (*A Skidding Car*) in. An Interview with T. Żukowski, "Gazeta Wyborcza", October 25, 2001.
- 18 J. Staniszkis, 'Political Capitalism' in Poland, Eastern European Politics and Societies, Vol. 5, no. 1, Winter 1991, *ibid. Postcommunism. The Emerging Enigma*, Warsaw: ISP PAN Publisher, 2000.
- 19 About the links between the corporate foreign and local structures: R. Bugaj, *Czas odnalezienia mienie porzucone* (*It is time to rediscover the abandoned property*), "Gazeta Wyborcza", March 29, 2002.
- 20 J. Lewandowski, *Niech kwitną imperia*, (*Let the empires grow*), "Gazeta Wyborcza", January 12–13, 2002.
- 21 Tomasz Żukowski still calls the conflict whose sides are represented by Samoobrona and Platforma Obywatelska as the one between 'pro-market' economy versus 'pro-social' economy attitude. While agreeing with his claim that the economic conflict is now more important than the cultural one, I think he fails to give the explanation of Samoobrona's popularity exclusively in terms of its anti-free-market attitude. *Samochód w poślizgu*, *ibid.*
- 22 Z. Bauman, *Globalization. The Human Consequences*, Sage 2002.
- 23 *Nie chcemy się przytulać* (*We do not want to get too close*). The interview with Donal Tusk, "Polityka", April 13, 2002.





## Chaos Out of Order?: Polish Parties' Electoral Strategies and Bases of Support

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At the beginning of the 1997–2001 parliament, Polish voters appeared to be developing clearer and more stable political preferences. Poland's previously fragmented and often confusing party system appeared, at last, to be slowly giving way to a partially consolidated one and stabilising around four main political groupings clustered around two axes.<sup>1</sup> The primary division was between two larger electoral blocs: the post-Solidarity centre-right Solidarity Electoral Action (Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność: AWS)<sup>2</sup> and the centre-left Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej: SLD) based on the heirs of their erstwhile communist opponents.<sup>3</sup> These two groupings competed on a left-right axis based primarily on their differing attitudes towards and assessments of the communist past and moral-cultural issues, particularly the role of the Catholic Church in public life, and the degree of religiosity was a key variable distinguishing their two electorates.<sup>4</sup> Otherwise, both of them had socially heterogeneous electorates, broadly similar socio-economic programmes and fluctuated around 25–35% in the opinion polls up until the October 2000 presidential election. At the same time, there was a secondary division between two medium-sized and more organisationally orthodox political parties: the liberal post-Solidarity Freedom Union (Unia Wolności: UW) and the agrarian Polish Peasant Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe: PSL) that formed as the organisational successor to the former communist satellite peasant party. Both parties were 'centrist' in the Polish sense but divided on the more conventional left-right axis in terms of their attitude towards socio-economic issues and with much more clearly defined, socially homogenous electorates. The UW's support was concentrated among young, urban and well educated 'transition winners' and the professional and public sector intelligentsia,



while the PSL's electorate was predominantly rural and based primarily on the one quarter of the Polish workforce employed in agriculture (mainly as peasant smallholders). These two parties' levels of support ranged between 5–15% and they were roughly equal contenders for the mantle of 'third force' in Polish politics.

However, Polish political sympathies proved to be much more fluid than this and, as Table 1 shows, the September 2001 parliamentary election shattered what appeared to be the newly emerging order in the party

**Table 1 September 1997 and September 2001 Parliamentary election results**

<i>Above the threshold</i>	<i>2001 %</i>	<i>2001 seats</i>	<i>1997 %</i>	<i>1997 seats</i>
Democratic Left Alliance-Labour Union (SLD-UP)	41.04	216	27.13 (SLD) 4.74 (UP)	
Civic Platform (PO)	12.68	65		
Self-Defence (Samoobrona)	10.20	53	0.08	
Law and Justice (PiS)	9.50	44		
Polish Peasant Party (PSL)	8.98	42	7.31	27
League of Polish Families (LPR)	7.87	38		
<i>Below the threshold</i>				
Solidarity Election Action (AWS)	5.60		33.83	201
Freedom Union (UW)	3.10		13.37	60

Source: *Rzeczpospolita*, 2 October 1997, 19 October 2001 and Polish State Electoral Commission

system. Firstly, the two governing post-Solidarity centre-right groupings, AWS and the UW, imploded and failed to secure any parliamentary representation at all. Secondly, the election saw the emergence of an unbalanced party system. A large electoral bloc dominated by the former communist SLD in coalition with the Labour Union (Unia Pracy: UP)<sup>5</sup> now faced a divided and fragmented group of five parties and groupings, at least four of whom were fairly unstable. Within that latter group, the UW's place was effectively taken over by a new (and somewhat more conservative) liberal grouping, the Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska: PO).<sup>6</sup> Most of the remnants of the AWS vote were picked up by two new right-wing groupings: the Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość: PiS)<sup>7</sup> and the League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin: LPR).<sup>8</sup> The PSL increased its share of the vote slightly but its relative success was eclipsed by that of the more radical agrarian-populist party Self-Defence (Samoobrona) led by farmers' protest leader Andrzej Lepper.<sup>9</sup>

This paper attempts to shed light on the evolving Polish party system and the changing relationship between Polish parties and their voters. It examines both party electoral strategies (whom they were trying to get to vote for them) their bases of support and electoral profile (who actually voted for them). The focus is on the six parties and groupings that secured parliamentary representation following the September 2001 election: the SLD-UP coalition, PO, Samoobrona, PiS, the PSL and LPR. The paper argues that there appears to be one large truly 'catch-all' political grouping on the centre-left, the SLD-UP coalition, that is able to win over a substantial number of voters in virtually every segment of the electorate, including those previously considered 'out of bounds'. There are also two right-wing groupings, the PiS and LPR, with very similar, fairly heterogeneous (and in some ways broadly complementary) socio-economic electoral profiles and electorates that appear to be more ideologically rooted, although this is somewhat clearer in the case of the LPR. At the same time there are three groupings with somewhat more clearly defined socio-economic electoral profiles: the liberal PO, that appears to have basically taken over from the UW, and the agrarian-populist Samoobrona and the PSL, that appeal to similar rural-agrarian electorates. The paper also argues that there is clearly some evidence of the old political divisions based on attitudes towards the past and moral-cultural issues giving way to voting based on socio-economic class, as some commentators predicted that it would,<sup>10</sup> but that the extent of this should not be overstated. The old divisions are still there, if only in terms of defining the 'core' left and right electorates. Rather than socio-economic class or interest based voting (that traditionally structured West European party systems), there appears to be a movement towards a pattern of party competition based on what might be termed 'valence' issues associated with competence and an ability to achieve shared objectives and goals.

## Party Electoral Strategies

Three of the six parties and groupings examined — the SLD-UP, PiS and LPR — had electoral strategies that were based on winning over as broad a swathe of the electorate as possible rather than appealing to specific and clearly defined socio-economic constituencies. This was broadly in line with the electoral strategies associated with the more recent catch-all and electoral-professional models of party organisation.<sup>11</sup> In so far as a specific group of voters was targeted by one of these groupings it was by the LPR whose appeal was focussed on a right-wing 'ideological' electorate. The other three groupings — the PO, Samoobrona and the



PSL — on the other hand, had electoral strategies that were aimed at winning the support of more distinct and clearly defined socio-economic constituencies. In other words, they resembled more closely the electoral strategies associated with Duverger's mass party model.<sup>12</sup>

According to their election programme, the SLD-UP campaign was aimed at "all Poles at home and abroad."<sup>13</sup> Based on the slogan 'Let's Return (to) Normality, Win the Future', the SLD-UP coalition attempted to appeal to voters on the basis of their pragmatism, competence and stability in contrast to the amateurism and ideologically-driven upheaval that they argued had characterised the AWS governments.<sup>14</sup> For example, in their programme, the SLD-UP argued that, "we need efficient, honest and normal governments. Governments that will not waste their time on internal arguments and divisions and will effectively solve social and economic problems."<sup>15</sup> Much of their popularity stemmed precisely from the fact that the SLD-UP coalition appeared to be a stable and coherent formation with a competent and tested leadership. Even before it transformed itself into a single, unitary party in June 1999, the SLD had always been a relatively disciplined and internally coherent grouping.<sup>16</sup> This decision also provided the former communists with an opportunity to rid themselves of the debts that SdRP had inherited from the communist Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza: PZPR). It also helped them to further symbolically disassociate themselves from their communist past and, therefore, reach out to voters across the left-right ideological divide.

The centre-right PiS also sought to project itself as a grouping that "wants to reject particularism and serve the whole of society, not just this or that part of it."<sup>17</sup> It ran a campaign that was aimed at a broad swathe of the electorate and focussed squarely on the twin themes of law and order and fighting corruption.<sup>18</sup> The programme's intellectual core was summarised in the statement that "there is not and cannot be a well functioning state without a strong moral and historical legitimacy, there cannot be social order without an efficient and strong state, there cannot be swift and lasting economic development without social order."<sup>19</sup> At their programmatic convention in August 2001, for example, PiS called for the introduction of a new, harsher criminal code together with the temporary re-introduction of the death penalty for certain offences.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, they sought to present themselves as the party of 'clean hands' and called for the cleansing of public life by forcing politicians to reveal their assets and establishing more effective mechanisms for rooting out corruption. In particular, the PiS campaign attempted to cash in on the popularity and alleged achievements of its leader, former Justice Minister Lech

Kaczyński. Easily the most popular member of the AWS led government, Kaczyński was placed at the centre of the PiS campaign and presented as the only politician who could be relied upon to get tough with criminals and corrupt public figures.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, not only was the PiS campaign not directed at any particularly socio-economic group of voters but (as some commentators noted) their election discourse also involved much less focus on 'ideological' issues compared to previous right-wing campaigns such as the one run by AWS in 1997. The objective here was partly to avoid issues that could prove divisive for a political grouping that included both Catholic nationalists and relatively secular conservatives. However, it was also aimed at helping PiS to pick up support among left-wing (communist-forgiving and anti-clerical) voters who might also have found its law and order and anti-corruption political slogans attractive.<sup>22</sup>

Although it also did not target any particular socio-economic group, the LPR ran on a more explicitly ideological programme that appealed unambiguously to right wing, Catholic traditionalist and nationalist voters. This was encapsulated in their campaign slogan (quoting the 1958 words of the former Polish primate Cardinal Wyszyński) 'So that Poland can be Poland'.<sup>23</sup> The LPR's election broadcasts were infused with religious and patriotic imagery and its campaign themes focused on traditionalism, nationalism and economic interventionism. In ideological terms, the LPR supported the promotion of fundamentalist Christian values in public life and argued that they were the "moral and material" protectors of the family. They also sought to portray themselves as the only effective defenders of the Polish national interest which, they argued, was best served by opposing Polish EU membership and the involvement of foreign firms and capital in the Polish economy, both of whom it blamed for unemployment and economic stagnation. The LPR also opposed privatisation and cuts in social welfare expenditure and supported government intervention to support Polish small and family run businesses.<sup>24</sup>

Ostensibly, the liberal PO was also careful to appear inclusive and emphasise that its appeal was not simply aimed at a narrow electorate of 'transition winners' or, as its leader Andrzej Olechowski put it, "we are not a party of rich people."<sup>25</sup> Its election programme, for example, stressed that "we are directing our programme at all of them (Polish citizens)."<sup>26</sup> However, in reality its programme was somewhat more narrowly focussed and much more likely to appeal to particular segments of the electorate. Indeed, it was basically aimed at a very similar kind of electorate to that which the UW had attempted to nuance its appeal in the September 1997 election and that I have previously characterised as a kind of 'pro-reform alliance': public sector professionals, entrepreneurs, intellectuals and



young people. There were, however, two important differences. Firstly, the PO presented itself much more aggressively as a political grouping committed to economic individualism and progressively reducing the role of the state by, for example, stressing policies such as de-regulation of the labour market and (a cornerstone of its election campaign) introducing a unitary 15% rate of taxation. In other words, it effectively ended up projecting itself as a grouping even more explicitly directed towards 'transition winners' than the UW had been.<sup>27</sup> Secondly, and particularly during the earlier stages of the campaign, the PO's leaders attempted to tap into the increasingly widespread anti-establishment and, more specifically, anti-party sentiment evident in Polish society by blending this message of economic liberalism with a call for political reforms. This 'soft populist' package of reforms included a "simplified" (majoritarian) electoral system, de-politicisation of the Senate, direct election of local mayors and town presidents, fewer local councillors and a reduction in the number and influence of various 'para-state' bodies.<sup>28</sup> It also ran a high profile campaign against state party funding that focused on provisions in the new electoral law (supported by all the other parties) to extend substantially the scope of annual party subventions.

Samoobrona and the PSL also focussed their electoral strategies more on appealing to specific segments of the electorate, but very different ones from the PO. Both of them directed their core message at a rural-agricultural electorate and in so far as they attempted to broaden out from this, it was towards the less well off and 'transition losers.'

Samoobrona projected itself as the most effective defender of those living in rural areas, particularly farmers who felt themselves among the greatest losers from the economic transition and had become increasingly radicalised in recent years. For example, party leader Andrzej Lepper continually referred nostalgically to the 1970s, a period that many Poles living in rural areas look back on wistfully. This included a symbolic visit to the grave of 1970s communist leader, Edward Gierek, who died during the campaign.<sup>29</sup> However, although a large part of Samoobrona's programme was aimed primarily at those living in rural communities, particularly the former employees of the former state farms the so-called State Agricultural Enterprises (*Państwowe Gospodarstwa Rolnicze*: PGRs), the grouping also attempted to construct a broader appeal. As well as stressing the need for greater state aid for farmers, the Samoobrona election broadcasts and TV campaign also focused on the need for greater intervention in the economy to reduce unemployment more generally. This was to be achieved by investment in the construction industry and increased trade with Poland's eastern neighbours. The party also

campaigned for more government expenditure on health, education and social welfare, with the centrepiece being a constitutionally guaranteed 'social minimum.' Abolishing government agencies, reducing bureaucracy and introducing higher taxes for foreign companies, it was claimed, would pay for this. Samoobrona also focussed part of its campaign on crime, and corruption by calling for the restoration of the death penalty and a so-called "lustration of assets."<sup>30</sup>

The PSL's electoral strategy was also, in part, based on attempting to give the party a broader appeal and reaching out beyond its core rural-agricultural constituency. One of the lessons that the party drew from its September 1997 parliamentary election defeat was that it had to change its image so that it was not perceived simply as an interest group representing peasant smallholders. Not only did the PSL face increasing competition for this electoral constituency. Due to long-term social and economic trends, the number of Poles making their living from agriculture was also in long-term decline. The party's strategy, given a test run during its leader Jarosław Kalinowski's October 2000 presidential campaign, was based on projecting the PSL as an aggressively anti-liberal and pro-state intervention party in order to win over broadly defined groups of 'transition losers' in both the town and countryside. This was part of a more ambitious attempt to shift the terms of the Polish political debate so that the main left-right axis was a socio-economic rather than ideological one, with the PSL representing the left wing, anti-liberal pole.<sup>31</sup> As the party's election programme put it, "the PSL is a centre-left party for everyone — farmers, hired employees, businessmen, craftsmen, shopkeepers, the intelligentsia, students, retirees and pensioners, residents of rural areas, small towns as well as cities — guided by the good of the state and a humanistic value system together with social awareness. The Polish Peasant Party recognises the principle of uniting the interests of all social groups...Do not let us listen to those forces who depend on breaking up rural and urban societies."<sup>32</sup> Similarly, a PSL election leaflet argued that, "in spite of what the sceptics say, (the PSL) is not a party in decline, although it is true that its history as a peculiar trade union for those living in the countryside has ended. But the history of the PSL as a nation-wide party, a peasantist Christian democracy has begun."<sup>33</sup> This was combined with a conscious attempt to project a more 'modern' and less provincial image. The PSL's national election rallies were, for example, shorn of their more traditional features such as village bands and rural 'disco polo' music, while party leaders appeared in smarter and more expensively tailored suits.<sup>34</sup>

However, there was also a noticeable tension evident in the party's campaign between a desire to broaden its appeal and not wanting to drift



too far away from and alienate its rural-agricultural base.<sup>35</sup> A survey (conducted by the author) of the PSL's coverage on the main TV evening news during the last fortnight of the campaign found that the party certainly did campaign on broader issues. These included calls to slow down privatisation, limit the involvement of foreign capital in the Polish economy and protect the less well off from budget cuts. However, the party also made rural-agricultural issues its main campaign theme on roughly every other day. Similarly, while the party's TV election broadcasts also covered these broader themes, the concerns of small town and rural voters were frequently emphasised more strongly. More generally, the party's election broadcasts were infused with very folksy rural imagery, including several shots of Kalinowski dancing at a traditional Polish rural wedding!

### **Party Electoral Profiles**

The electoral profiles of the six parties and groupings examined corresponded broadly to those segments of the electorate targeted in the party electoral strategies outlined above. The SLD-UP, PiS and LPR had broad, socially heterogeneous electorates, while the PO, and even more so Samoobrona and the PSL, had more clearly defined socio-economic bases of support.

As noted above, the SLD always had a fairly socially heterogeneous electorate. However, as Table 2 shows, in the September 2001 election the SLD-UP coalition emerged as a truly 'catch-all' phenomenon winning support across an incredibly broad range of socio-economic groups. The coalition had a slightly higher than average share of the vote among older voters. It enjoyed slightly more support in towns and less in villages and cities and among those with a post-16 education. It also won slightly more support among workers, the unemployed, pensioners and those employed in public administration. However, although it described itself as a left wing, social democratic formation, the SLD-UP coalition was clearly able to win the most support in every socio-demographic group (except for farmers where it still won a respectable 21.8% of the vote). Indeed, not only was its electorate not particularly skewed objectively towards what one might consider traditional social democratic constituencies. An October 2001 CBOS survey found that there was also nothing particularly subjectively left wing about the attitudes of SLD-UP voters towards socio-economic issues compared to those of other parties. Rather they had what might be characterised (in Polish terms) as 'centrist' views on the economy.<sup>36</sup>

Table 2 September 2001 Parliamentary election voting patterns

	<i>SLD-UP</i>	<i>PO</i>	<i>Self- Defence</i>	<i>PiS</i>	<i>PSL</i>	<i>LPR</i>
<b>Voting by age</b>						
18–24	39.9	19.7	9.0	8.7	8.1	5.2
25–34	38.3	17.9	10.4	8.8	9.7	5.5
35–44	40.0	12.8	11.5	8.9	11.0	6.2
45–54	47.6	10.5	9.9	9.1	9.3	5.3
55–64	50.2	8.2	8.5	9.7	7.6	7.5
65+	49.1	8.1	7.5	9.6	7.1	9.2
<b>Voting by place of residence</b>						
Villages	35.4	8.4	16.3	6.2	18.8	7.1
Small towns	51.1	12.8	7.6	8.1	5.5	5.9
Large towns	48.5	15.0	5.9	11.6	3.3	5.8
Cities	40.9	19.8	3.5	16.5	1.7	6.4
<b>Voting by education</b>						
Primary	41.4	6.5	15.5	6.3	14.1	8.5
Vocational	43.2	7.9	16.1	7.0	12.1	6.3
Post-16	46.4	13.6	8.4	9.6	8.1	6.0
Higher	42.3	19.0	3.3	11.4	5.3	5.3
<b>Voting by occupation</b>						
Managers	40.2	18.9	3.9	11.8	6.2	5.7
Businessmen	41.0	19.1	9.4	10.6	6.2	4.6
Administration	46.7	14.5	6.9	10.4	7.4	5.8
Workers	47.8	9.2	13.4	8.2	8.2	5.4
Farmers	21.8	2.9	28.3	3.0	33.3	5.9
Housewives	37.3	13.3	12.6	8.9	9.1	8.6
Pensioners	51.8	8.2	8.0	8.8	6.5	8.1
Students	39.6	22.6	6.6	9.9	6.5	5.0
Unemployed	46.4	9.9	13.6	7.0	8.7	7.0
<b>Voting by 1997 party</b>						
AWS	12.5	20.1	10.0	20.1	5.4	14.8
SLD	88.2	1.7	4.5	1.3	2.8	0.5
UW	16.5	38.3	3.1	9.1	2.8	1.5
PSL	9.9	2.5	19.6	2.5	60.9	2.9
ROP	4.9	8.8	14.9	36.8	6.1	23.4
UP	46.3	12.7	11.8	9.2	5.4	6.0
<b>Average</b>	41.04	12.68	10.20	9.50	8.98	7.87

Source: Exit poll figures supplied to the author by OBOP

Moreover, there was also evidence that the SLD-UP coalition was able to cross historical, religious and territorial divides. In other words, it won over voters that might have previously been considered out of bounds for a formation that was based on the successor to the communist party and whose electorate had previously been defined primarily in terms of their attitudes towards the past and moral-cultural issues. Firstly, to some extent at least, it succeeded in changing its image as a ‘post-communist’



formation and persuaded a sizeable bloc of voters to cross the 'historic' communist-Solidarity divide with, as Table 2 shows, 16.5% of 1997 UW voters and even 12.5% of 1997 AWS voters supporting the party. A January 2000 CBOS survey also found that 43% of voters considered the SLD to be primarily a West European-type social democratic party compared with 31% who saw it as a communist successor party.<sup>37</sup> Secondly, the SLD-UP was also able to cross the 'religious divide' and win a significant share of the vote among the devout Churchgoers, hitherto the core right-wing ideological constituency. As Table 3 shows, 22% (the

**Table 3 Party voting profiles by Church attendance**

	<i>SLD-UP</i>	<i>PO</i>	<i>Samoobrona</i>	<i>PiS</i>	<i>PSL</i>	<i>LPR</i>	% of sample
Several times a week	22	7	10	12	3	26	7
Once a week	31	15	13	10	11	10	51
1–2 per month	49	10	18	5	8	4	17
Several times a year	52	21	8	7	5	1	19
Never	57	12	11	2	1	0	7
Average	39	14	12	9	8	8	

Source: CBOS. Preferencje partyjne trzy tygodnie po wyborach. Warsaw: CBOS: October 2001.

second largest group after LPR voters) of those who attended Church services several times a week and 31% (the largest group) of those who attended once a week voted for the SLD-UP. Thirdly, we can also see evidence of this ability to pick up votes in areas that might have previously been considered out of bounds when we look at the territorial distribution of the vote in the 16 new administrative regions that were set up in 1998. Traditionally there has been a clear left-right regional divide in Polish elections. Voters living in Polish Southern and Eastern regions (Lubelskie, Małopolskie, Podkarpackie and Podlaskie) have consistently voted for post-Solidarity right-wing parties and candidates. Those living in the Northern and Western regions (Zachodnio-Pomorskie, Wielkopolskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Lubuskie (although not the traditional Solidarity stronghold of Pomorskie) have voted for the former communist left.<sup>38</sup> As Table 4 shows, although the left-wing vote was, once again, skewed towards the Northern and Western regions, this did not prevent the SLD-UP from winning the largest share of the vote in every region. This included traditional right-wing strongholds such as Lubelskie, Małopolskie and Podkarpackie.

**Table 4** September 2001 parliamentary voting by region

	<i>SLD-UP</i>	<i>PO</i>	<i>Samoobrona</i>	<i>PiS</i>	<i>PSL</i>	<i>LPR</i>
Dolnośląskie	47.25	13.92	9.81	7.84	5.27	6.87
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	48.91	9.27	10.77	7.19	8.34	7.89
Lubelskie	34.40	7.35	14.43	7.58	19.07	10.52
Lubuskie	51.54	9.81	9.60	5.66	7.49	5.44
Łódzkie	44.75	9.52	13.23	7.41	9.95	7.44
Małopolskie	30.07	16.70	8.05	12.63	9.66	11.09
Mazowieckie	34.97	13.84	8.56	15.01	10.77	7.79
Opolskie	38.84	11.97	11.01	5.33	5.08	6.62
Podkarpackie	31.37	8.10	11.02	8.57	14.66	14.17
Podlaskie	37.91	8.42	12.04	11.51	10.96	11.79
Pomorskie	35.55	25.36	7.84	12.52	4.20	6.92
Śląskie	46.24	13.76	7.16	9.58	4.10	4.82
Świętokrzyskie	45.08	7.16	12.81	6.73	15.07	6.24
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	47.53	11.05	11.05	7.18	7.92	7.70
Wielkopolskie	46.26	12.69	10.68	6.71	9.10	6.83
Zachodnio-pomorskie	49.29	11.65	14.97	6.56	3.88	5.27
Average	41.04	12.68	10.20	9.50	8.98	7.87

Source: *Polityka*. 6 October 2001.

As Table 2 shows, the electorates of PiS and the LPR, the two right wing groupings that secured parliamentary representation, were also fairly socially heterogeneous and to, some extent, complementary. There were no great variations in terms of age profile, although support for the LPR was slightly skewed towards older voters. PiS voters tended to live in urban areas, while LPR voters were slightly more concentrated in small towns and villages. PiS voters were skewed towards those who had completed a post-16 education, while LPR voters tended to have only completed a primary one. PiS supporters were drawn from every socio-occupational group (although the party won somewhat fewer votes among farmers) as were those who supported the LPR (although slightly fewer businessmen and students and more housewives and pensioners voted for them). While the PiS electorate profile was, therefore, somewhat skewed toward better educated voters, from higher earning or status occupational groups and living in larger towns, the variations were really fairly small and both groupings' electoral profiles were fairly socially heterogeneous.

So what was it that defined the LPR and PiS voter? There was clearly an ideological element that related to left-right self-placement. As Table 5 shows, PiS and the LPR won 21% and 20% support respectively among right-wing voters but only 1% among left-wing voters. This ideological skewing was much more clearly evident in the case of the LPR. As Table 5 shows, PiS was able to pick up support among 9% of 'centrist' voters compared with only 5% that supported the LPR. But one can see this even



**Table 5** Party electoral profiles by left-right self-placement

	<i>SLD-UP</i>	<i>PO</i>	<i>Samoobrona</i>	<i>PiS</i>	<i>PSL</i>	<i>LPR</i>
Left	71	3	10	1	9	1
Centre	29	19	19	9	8	5
Right	9	23	8	21	5	20
Don't know	28	19	15	5	13	4
Average	39	14	12	9	8	8

Source: CBOS. Preferencje partyjne trzy tygodnie po wyborach. Warsaw: CBOS: October 2001.

more clearly when one examines patterns of party support based on religiosity and Church attendance, as noted above, traditionally one of the short hand ways of determining left and right 'ideological' electorates in post-communist Poland. An October 2001 CBOS survey, for example, found that LPR voters held objectively left-wing views on issues such as privatisation, state intervention in the economy and redistribution of wealth. However, they combined these with strong opposition to Polish EU membership and, more generally, a nationalist and anti-cosmopolitan worldview. LPR voters were also the strongest opponents of legalising abortion and (relatively speaking) of the Church playing an active role in public affairs. Moreover, as Table 3 shows, while the PiS electorate was somewhat skewed towards the most religious, this was much more clearly the case among those who supported the LPR. Indeed, the LPR actually won the highest level of support of any party or grouping (26%) among those who attended Church services several times a week and very little support among those who never attended. This, together with their ideological self-placement on the right of the political spectrum, suggests that it was ideological and moral-cultural issues rather than economic dissatisfaction that was the key factor determining the LPR's base of support.<sup>39</sup> The LPR was, therefore, able to harness what might be termed the 'religious right' electorate that was clustered around and could be effectively mobilised by the influential fundamentalist Catholic-nationalist broadcaster Radio Maryja (which has around four million listeners). These voters supported AWS at the last election and appear to have defected to the LPR in September 2001.

The PiS voter was, on the other hand, much more difficult to define. An October 2001 CBOS survey, for example, found that, in addition to their broad social heterogeneity and lack of particularly sharp ideological skewing, PiS voters appeared to lack any particularly distinctive views on the major political issues. In many ways, the best way to characterise these voters was as 'Christian democratic': moderately liberal in terms of

economic policy, moderately conservative in terms of moral-cultural issues and the role of Church in state affairs and moderately internationalist in terms of their attitude towards foreign cooperation.<sup>40</sup> One possible explanation for the PiS phenomenon was that it was a highly personal vote linked to its leader Lech Kaczyński's stance on the issues of crime and corruption. As noted above, PiS ran an election campaign that focussed heavily on these issues and attempted to cash in on Kaczyński's popularity and alleged achievements. This message clearly struck a chord with a significant number of Polish voters. A July 2001 CBOS survey, for example, found that voters felt that PiS was the grouping most capable of protecting citizens' security and fighting corruption.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, another July 2001 CBOS survey found that PiS voters gave the fact that they were independent and not connected with any party (44%), would reduce crime and improve safety on the streets (43%) and were honest and uncorrupted (34%) as the main reasons for supporting this grouping. This compared with only 7% of voters who intended to vote PiS because they supported its economic programme.<sup>42</sup> However, there is other evidence that points in the opposite direction. An October 2001 CBOS survey, for example, found that PiS voters were no more likely than average to support the restoration of the death penalty.<sup>43</sup> It may, of course, have simply been the case that while PiS supporters did not themselves take a noticeably more authoritarian stance on these issues, they were the most important ones for them. At the same time, they may have believed that Kaczyński and his party would be the most effective at tackling them. Either way, other than a broadly 'Christian democratic' political orientation, it is not entirely clear what characterises the PiS voter and this is clearly an issue that requires further research.

The other three groupings examined, the PO and (even more so) Samoobrona and the PSL, had more clearly defined socio-economic bases of support.

As Table 2 shows, in terms of its electoral profile, the PO basically took over where the UW left off. Although they were clearly not exactly the same people (the PO also won 20% of 1997 AWS voters and 12.7% of UP voters), the PO won support among precisely those segments of the electorate where the UW had done well in 1997: younger, better educated, urban voters. The PO performed both well and badly in the same occupational groups as the UW had, winning significantly above average support among managers, businessmen, students and below average among farmers, pensioners, workers and the unemployed. An October 2001 CBOS survey also showed that, as well as having an electoral profile skewed towards 'transition winners', PO voters held consistently the most



liberal views on the economy. For example, they were the most supportive of swift privatisation of state enterprises even if this led to an increase in unemployment and, more generally, international cooperation and opening up the Polish economy to foreign competition and investment. They were also the least supportive of economic redistribution policies such as increasing taxation and limiting the incomes of the better off.<sup>44</sup>

As Table 2 shows, the two agrarian parties Samoobrona and the PSL had very similar socio-economic electoral profiles. Although they were slightly skewed towards middle age voters, there was little differentiation in terms of age. As one would have expected from agrarian parties, both clearly enjoyed greater support in villages and smaller towns and below average support in larger towns and cities. Reflecting the educational profile of rural voters, both groupings enjoyed more support among those who had only completed a primary or vocational education and less support among those with a post-16 or higher education. However, the most striking variable distinguishing these two groupings was the much higher than average level of support among farmers among whom they won over 60% of the vote between them (PSL: 33.3%, Samoobrona: 28.3%). Both groupings also won below average support among managers, students, businessmen (somewhat less so in the case of Samoobrona), those employed in public administration and pensioners.

There has been a great deal of speculation about whom precisely the Samoobrona voter is. Although more evidence and analysis is required before any firm conclusions can be drawn, a number of characteristics can be identified and initial hypotheses advanced. Some commentators have argued that Samoobrona's defining feature was its ability to portray itself as the most convincing champion of the disaffected and thereby win the support of the most dissatisfied voters who were prepared to accept radical forms of protest action.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, in a direct reference to the January 1999 farmers' protests that brought party leader Andrzej Lepper back into the political limelight, it ran on the campaign slogan 'It's time to unblock Poland'.<sup>46</sup> An October 2002 CBOS survey also found that, together with those who supported the PSL and LPR, Samoobrona voters adopted the most left wing and national protectionist stance on socio-economic issues.<sup>47</sup> They supported redistribution of wealth through a state-guaranteed social minimum and capping the incomes of the better off, imposing tariffs to protect Polish producers from foreign competition and opposing privatisation and the presence of foreign capital in the Polish economy. The main difference between the Samoobrona and LPR voter was that while the former represented primarily an economically dissatisfied electorate, the latter (in spite of their left-wing economic views) appeared to be

primarily an electorate of the ideological hard right. As noted above, the LPR voter could be clearly distinguished by their ideological self-placement and religiosity, which contrasted sharply with the relatively anti-clerical views of the Samoobrona voter. The main difference between Samoobrona and the PSL was that, although it was a rurally based agrarian party that had originated as a farmers union, Samoobrona was also able to reach out beyond its rural-agrarian core. As Table 2 shows, Samoobrona picked up a reasonable share of the vote among less-well off voters in small towns (and even, to some extent, large towns and cities) and above average support among groups of urban 'transition losers' such as workers and the unemployed.

Samoobrona's ability to not only emerge as the first significant rurally-based electoral rival that the PSL faced since it saw off the post-Solidarity parties rural parties in 1993 but also reach beyond this rural-agrarian core is interesting. This is because it succeeded in doing precisely what the PSL had been attempting since its disappointing 1997 election result. As noted above, the PSL's 2001 electoral strategy was based, in part at least, on attempting to give the party a broader appeal. However, as Table 2 shows, the PSL's strategy did not really produce the breakthrough that it had hoped for. Although it was able to make some minor inroads into virtually every certain socio-economic and occupational group (which compensated for the 4.5% fall in its share of the vote among farmers), its core remained firmly rooted among rural-agricultural voters. This was reflected in the fact that the most important reason given by PSL voters for supporting the party was precisely because it was felt to represent a specific segment of the electorate. For example, a May 2001 CBOS survey found that 66% of PSL voters said that they intended to vote for the party because it "defended their interests, looked after their own."<sup>48</sup> Similarly, a July 2001 CBOS survey found that 46% of PSL voters intended to vote for it because it represented "people like them," the highest proportion of any of the parties surveyed.<sup>49</sup> Rather, it was Samoobrona that was able to construct this broader appeal and thereby win more votes overall than the PSL in spite of the fact that it finished behind them among the core rural-agrarian electorate.

The PSL, therefore, faces unresolved questions about its future electoral strategy. On the one hand, the party leadership are inclined to continue the PSL's transformation into a party that has a broader appeal, still rooted primarily in rural communities but focussed more on a European oriented "modern countryside." On the other hand, there are those who believe that it should remain a primarily rural-agrarian party and re-orientate itself towards the centre-right in ideological terms.<sup>50</sup> As noted



above, this strategic dilemma was reflected in the rather schizophrenic nature of the PSL election campaign. Indeed, some commentators are dubious about the PSL's ability to radically transform itself arguing that it will "always remain a party of a clearly defined section of the electorate" and will "never do anything against its iron rural electorate, because this is its parliamentary bread and butter."<sup>51</sup>

### **Old and New Divisions in Polish politics**

Finally, let us return to consider the question of whether the September 2001 parliamentary election provides any evidence about the long-term trajectory of Polish politics? In particular, does it support the hypothesis that the old divisions in Polish politics were disappearing and giving way to a new set of alignments? Does the evidence presented above confirm what appeared to be the implicit message of the October 2000 presidential election: that the bi-polarity based on attitudes towards the communist past and moral-cultural issues was ceasing to be the most salient issue dividing Polish voters?<sup>52</sup> Was it giving way to more traditional left-right divisions based on socio-economic class and concomitant issue dimensions such as attitudes towards the distribution of wealth, the role of the state in the economy, and levels of taxation and public expenditure?

The answer to this question is, on the basis of the evidence presented above, a somewhat ambiguous one. To some extent, there is evidence to suggest that the old 'ideological' divisions based primarily on 'values' are giving way to new ones based on interest-based socio-economic class voting. The main piece of evidence to support this was clearly the ability of the SLD-UP coalition to turn itself into a truly 'catch-all' electoral formation. As noted above, the SLD-UP succeeded in picking up voters that might have been previously considered out of bounds from across the political spectrum and persuading substantial numbers of them to cross the 'historic' and 'moral-cultural' divide. While the 'post-Solidarity' camp appeared to be disintegrating, the sheer breadth of the SLD-UP's base of support suggested that a much larger segment of the electorate was now more open and available to all parties and groupings. A secondary piece of evidence to support this proposition was the increase in support for parties with fairly clear socio-economic profiles. As Table 1 shows, in September 1997 the two medium sized parties with socio-economic class-based electorates, the UW and PSL, won just over 20% of the vote. In September 2001, if one includes the votes for the UW together with the PO and the two agrarian parties, 35% of voters supported parties whose electorates were clearly skewed in terms of their socio-economic profiles.<sup>53</sup>

But this is not the whole story. The ‘old’ divisions have not entirely disappeared and they have certainly not given way completely to socio-economic class based voting. Indeed, as Table 1 shows, 64% of voters still voted for parties that lacked a distinct socio-economic class profile: the SLD-UP, PiS, LPR and AWS. In other words, there is still quite limited evidence of the strong correlation between party support and socio-economic class that formed the main basis for structuring the dominant left-right electoral cleavages in most Western democracies. Why is this the case?

Firstly, there is evidence that attitudes towards the past and moral-cultural issues in general, and levels of religiosity in particular, still appear to be important for many Polish voters in the sense that they provide the basis for the ‘core’ left and right electorates. One can see this most clearly in the relatively strongly pro-clerical views and, as Table 3 shows, high level of religiosity of the LPR electorate which represents a kind of core hard right electorate. However, if one also looks at the SLD-UP electorate then, as Tables 3 and 5 show clearly, it is also ideologically skewed towards the left and most prevalent among those who never attend Church services.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, an October 2001 CBOS survey revealed that the most distinctive feature of SLD-UP voters’ attitudes was their relatively high level of anti-clericalism.<sup>55</sup> This suggests that there is also a core hard left electorate that can be identified by reference to the ‘old’ political divisions.<sup>56</sup>

Secondly, if not the emergence of primarily socio-economic class based voting then what we may be seeing in Polish politics is the increasing development of patterns of party competition based on less ideological ‘valence’ issues. This is broadly in line with a phenomenon that some commentators have claimed has become increasingly important in determining voting patterns in more established Western democracies. With the decline of traditional socio-economic class based voting (or realignment, as some commentators have termed it), came the emergence of catch-all/electoral-professional parties that based their electoral strategies on seeking to attract as broad an electorate as possible. Panebianco has referred to this as appealing to an “opinion electorate” rather than an “electorate of belonging” on a more narrowly ideological basis.<sup>57</sup> This involved parties concentrating on policy effectiveness and ‘valence’ issues that transcended narrow group interests and, thereby, appealing to voters on the basis of their ability to tackle objectives that are widely shared, such as effective management of the economy and reducing crime and corruption. This was, in turn, accompanied by a concomitant focus on the competence and effectiveness of party leaders in achieving these shared objectives and,



therefore, as potential national statesmen rather than representatives of a specific socio-economic class or segment of the electorate. The result was, as Katz and Mair put it, a more personalised (or 'Americanised') style of party election campaigning with elections "seen to revolve around the choice of leaders rather than the choice of policies or programmes."<sup>58</sup>

Certainly, as noted above, there was clear evidence of this in the September 2001 Polish election, particularly in the SLD-UP, PiS and PO campaigns. As noted above, the SLD-UP projected itself as representing, and attempted to appeal to voters on the basis of, their pragmatism, competence and stability. Similarly, the PiS campaign focussed heavily on the party's alleged unique ability to tackle the issues of crime and corruption. In both cases the personal qualities and presumed competence of their leaders, Leszek Miller and Lech Kaczyński, were heavily emphasised. PiS, for example, built its image on Kaczyński's popularity and alleged achievements by displaying his picture on all of its national campaign billboards.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, the PO campaign focused on its three founders and leaders (who were variously referred to as the 'three tenors' or 'three musketeers'): Andrzej Olechowski, Maciej Płażyński and Donald Tusk.<sup>60</sup> A July 2001 CBOS survey found that the leaders' personal qualities were among the reasons most commonly cited for voting for that grouping by supporters of the SLD-UP coalition (40%), PO (34%) and PiS (23%).<sup>61</sup> Indeed, the September 2001 election was significantly more leader-orientated than the previous campaign and party leaders featured prominently in the TV campaigns of all the political groupings examined except for the LPR.<sup>62</sup>

## Conclusion

The current Polish party system, therefore, appears to be dominated by one large truly 'catch-all' party on the centre-left, the SLD-UP coalition, that is able to win substantial numbers of voters in virtually every segment of the electorate, including those it may have previously considered as 'out of bounds'. There are also two right-wing groupings, PiS and LPR, with very similar, fairly heterogeneous (and in some ways broadly complementary) electorates that appear to be more ideologically rooted, although this is somewhat clearer in the case of the LPR. At the same time, there are three groupings with more distinctive socio-economic electoral profiles. The liberal PO has basically taken over from the UW as the party of younger, better-educated and urban voters and occupational groups that are most supportive of the socio-economic transition. Samoobrona and the PSL appeal to similar rural-agrarian electorates, except that the former has

succeeded in reaching beyond this rural-agrarian core rather more effectively. There is also clearly some evidence of the old political divisions based on attitudes towards the past and moral-cultural issues giving way to the kind of left-right class based divide traditionally associated with Western party systems. But this should not be overstated. There is also evidence that historic divisions remain important in defining core left and right electorates. Moreover, in so far as the old divisions are receding, they are doing so in favour of a pattern of party competition based on competing claims to competence and an ability to achieve shared objectives and goals (so-called 'valence issues') rather than class-based voting.

Finally, two major caveats are required to these broad conclusions. Firstly, these findings are somewhat speculative and clearly require both more precise data and rigorous statistical analysis. Perhaps even more fundamentally, more research is needed on determining what Polish voters actually understand by and identify with the terms left and right (and centre) if, as the data above suggests, they remain such strong predictors of voting behaviour.<sup>63</sup> Secondly, while the September 2001 election shattered the emerging order, it also left the political scene highly unstable and it will take some time for the contours of the new political landscape to become emerge properly.<sup>64</sup> In particular, while there is a relatively consolidated and monolithic ex-communist left, the future shape of the extremely divided and fragmented Polish centre-right, where a chaos of political groupings appears to reconfigure after (and in between) every election, remains a great unknown. Those centre-right groupings that did secure parliamentary representation are, at best, raw material. They are proto-parties still in the process of evolution and containing so many potentially destructive elements (both programmatically and personally) that it is difficult to envisage any of them providing the basis for a coherent anti-SLD alternative in the short term.

## Notes

- 1 See: A. Szczerbiak. 'The Impact of the 1998 Local Elections on the Emerging Polish Party System.' *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*. Vol 15 No 3. September 1999. pp. 80–100; and CBOS. *Partie polityczne: ich reprezentatywność i profile sympatyków*. Warsaw: CBOS. December 2000.
- 2 AWS was formed in June 1996 as a conglomerate of more than 30 right wing and centre-right parties and political groupings under hegemony of the Solidarity trade union.
- 3 At the September 1997 election, the SLD was also electoral coalition. It comprised more than 30 parties and groupings clustered around the direct successor to the communist party Social Democracy of the Republic of



- Poland (Socjaldemokracja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej: SdRP) and the former pro-regime All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions federation (Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych: OPZZ). However, in June 1999 it transformed itself into a single, unitary party.
- 4 See: A. Szczerbiak. 'Interests and Values: Polish Parties and their Electorates.' *Europe-Asia Studies*. Vol 51 No 8. 1999. pp. 1401–1432; T. Szawiel, 'Zróznicowania lewicowo prawicowe i jego korelaty', in R. Markowski, ed. *Wybory Parlamentarne 1997: System partyjny, postawy polityczne, zachowanie wyborcze*. 1999. Warsaw: ISP PAN; and K. Jasiewicz. 'Portfel czy różaniec? Ekonomiczne i aksjologiczne determinanty zachowań wyborczych' in *Wybory Parlamentarne 1997*.
  - 5 A smaller social democratic party that included both former communists and Solidarity activists among its leading members and in September 1997 narrowly failed to cross the 5% threshold required for parliamentary representation.
  - 6 Former Finance and Foreign Minister Andrzej Olechowski, AWS Sejm Marshall Maciej Płażyński and the UW Senate Deputy Marshall Donald Tusk (known collectively as 'the three tenors') formed the PO in January 2001. It was an attempt to capitalise on Olechowski's relative success as an independent liberal-conservative candidate in the October 2000 presidential election.
  - 7 PiS was formed in April 2001 by Jarosław Kaczyński to capitalise on the popularity of his twin brother, the AWS nominated (but politically independent) Justice Minister Lech Kaczyński. However, it fought the election in a coalition (of the same name) with the Right-wing Agreement party (Porozumienie Prawicy: PP), also formed in April 2001 by defectors from two AWS affiliated parties: the Christian National Union (Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe: ZChN) and the Conservative People's Party (Stronnictwo Konserwatywno-Ludowe: SKL).
  - 8 Although formally a political party registered four months before election, the LPR was actually a coalition of various right-wing Catholic-nationalist parties and groupings (finally concluded at the end of June 2001). These included: Antoni Macierewicz's Catholic-National Movement (Ruch Katolicko-Narodowy: RKN), Jan Łopuszański's Polish Agreement (Porozumienie Polskie: PP), and the National Party (Stronnictwo Narodowe: SN) led by the Giertych family together with various prominent individuals such as militant Solidarity activist Zygmunt Wrzodak.
  - 9 Samoobrona was both a political party and farmers' union. One of the most controversial figures in Polish politics, Lepper first came to prominence in the early 1990s as leader of radical farmer protests against debt foreclosure and returned to frontline politics during the January 1999 farmer road blockades.
  - 10 See, for example: G. Evans and S. Whitefield. 'Identifying the Bases of Party Competition in Eastern Europe.' *British Journal of Political Science*. Vol 23 No 4. 1993. pp. 521–548; L. Kolarska-Bobinska. 'Co innego będzie dzielić Polaków', *Rzeczpospolita*, 26 November 1998; A. Kublik. 'Obroty elektoratów: Rozmowa z politologiem dr Radosławem Markowskim.' *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 7 February 2000; and 'Zasłużony odpoczynek prawicy: Z Pawłem Śpiewakiem, socjologiem, rozmawia Małgorzata Subotić.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 7 May 2001. Cf: M. Grabowska, 'Przyszłość polskiej sceny

- politycznej — stabilność i zmiana', in Instytut Spraw Publicznych. *Przyszłość polskiej sceny politycznej*. Warsaw: ISP. March 1999. pp. 39–66.
- 11 See: O. Kirchheimer, 'The Transformation of West European party systems', in J.P. LaPalambora and M. Weiner, eds. *Political Parties and Political Development*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1966. pp. 177–200; and A. Panebianco. *Political Parties: Organisation and Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1988.
  - 12 See: M. Duverger. *Political Parties: Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State*. London: Methuen. 1954 (1951).
  - 13 Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej-Unia Pracy. *Przywróćmy normalność. Wygrajmy przyszłość*. Warsaw: SLD-UP. 2001.
  - 14 See: E. Olczyk. "Szalikowcy" na Torwarze.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 9 July 2001; and L. Miller. 'Dlaczego warto głosować na SLD-UP?' *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 17 September 2001.
  - 15 See: *Przywróćmy normalność*.
  - 16 The reasons for this lie in the SLD's extraordinary culture of self-discipline and restraint compared with other parties in post-communist Poland. This was rooted in: the strong sense of mutual solidarity and loyalty learned in communist youth organisations, a relatively non-ideological and pragmatic approach to politics and the experience of being politically isolated at the beginning of the 1990s. See, for example: J. Raciborski. 'Tajemnica sukcesu SLD,' *Rzeczpospolita*. 6 April 2001; and M. Subotić. 'Bezideowość — cnota główna,' *Rzeczpospolita*. 15 May 2001.
  - 17 See: Prawo i Sprawiedliwość. *Program Prawo i Sprawiedliwości*. Warsaw: PiS. August 2001.
  - 18 See: P. Wroński, 'Marsz Kaczyńskich.' *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 11 June 2001; and L. Kaczyński. 'Dlaczego warto głosować na PiS,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 19 September 2001.
  - 19 See: *Program Prawo i Sprawiedliwości*.
  - 20 See: 'Referendum i kara śmierci,' *Rzeczpospolita*. 6 August 2001.
  - 21 See: J. Paradowska. 'Ruch dwóch,' *Polityka*. 21 July 2001.
  - 22 See: P. Zaremba. 'Prawicowe odrodzenie czy przegrupowanie.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 7 June 2001; and M.D. Zdort. 'Koniec karnawału,' *Rzeczpospolita*. 13 July 2001.
  - 23 See: 'Apel do podświadomości.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 3 August 2001.
  - 24 See also: Liga Polskich Rodzin. *Tezy Programowe Ligi Polskich Rodzin*. Warsaw: LPR. undated.
  - 25 See: M. Subotić. 'Od Olivii do Olivii.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 21 September 2001.
  - 26 See: Platforma Obywatelska. *Nasz Program. Normalni Ludzie. Normalne Państwo*. Warsaw: PO. 2001. See also: 'Propozycja dla tych, którzy nie czekają na mannę z nieba: Z Pawłem Piskorskim, szefem sztabu wyborczego Platformy Obywatelskiej, rozmawia Małgorzata Subotić.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 22 June 2001.
  - 27 See: 'Antyeseldowska Platforma,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 9 July 2001; and D. Tusk, A. Olechowski and M. Płażyński. 'Dlaczego warto głosować na PO,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 21 September 2001.
  - 28 See: M.D. Zdort. 'Platforma Obywatelska rusza do parlamentu,' *Rzeczpospolita*. 20–21 January 2001.



- 29 See: M. Majewski. 'Alternatywy trzy.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 21 September 2001. Gierek's eldest son, Adam, ended up being elected to the Senate as an SLD-UP candidate with the largest share of the vote obtained by any individual candidate.
- 30 See, for example: Samoobrona. *Wybory 2001: jest tylko jedna POLSKA, jest tylko jeden SPOSÓB*. Warsaw: Samoobrona. 2001.
- 31 See: E. Czaczkowska. 'PSL mierzy wysoko.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 20 February 2001; E. Czaczkowska. 'Kampania według normy,' *Rzeczpospolita*. 30 June 2001–1 July 2001; 'PSL włącza drugi bieg,' *Rzeczpospolita*. 25 July 2001; and E. Czaczkowska. 'Sentymentalnie i bardzo konkretnie. *Rzeczpospolita*. 21 September 2001. On Kalinowski's October 2000 presidential election campaign see: A. Szczerbiak. 'Explaining Kwaśniewski's Landslide: The October 2000 Polish Presidential Election.' *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*. Vol 17 No 4. December 2001. pp. 78–107 (93).
- 32 See: Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe. *Blisko ludzkich spraw: deklaracja wyborcza*. Warsaw: PSL. 2001.
- 33 Cited in an election leaflet produced by PSL Warsaw District.
- 34 See: M. Lizut. 'Garnitury szare,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 9 August 2001; and M. Janicki. 'Apacze w sukmanach,' *Polityka*. 25 August 2001.
- 35 For previous PSL attempts to broaden its electoral base see: A. Szczerbiak. 'The Polish Peasant Party: a Mass Party in Postcommunist Eastern Europe?' *East European Politics and Societies*. Vol 15 No 2.
- 36 See: CBOS. *Poglądy elektoratów partii politycznych*. Warsaw: CBOS. October 2001.
- 37 See: CBOS. *Oblicza SLD, cyli o tożsamości nowej partii*. Warsaw: CBOS. February 2000.
- 38 See, for example, the patterns of regional voting in the 1998 local elections in: 'Gminy lokalne, sejmiki partyjne.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 24–25 October 1998. This pattern of voting also broadly corresponds to the four 'historic' regions identified in H. Tworzecki. *Parties and Politics in Post-1989 Poland*. Oxford: Westview Press. 1996. For more on Polish electoral geography see: T. Zarycki and A. Nowak. 'Hidden dimensions: the stability and structure of regional political cleavages in Poland.' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. Vol 33. 2000. pp. 331–354.
- 39 See: A. Kublik. 'Podziałów bez liku: Rozmowa z prof. Leną Kolarską-Bobińską.' *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 26 September 2001.
- 40 See: *Poglądy elektoratów partii politycznych*. See also: 'Podziałów bez liku.'
- 41 See: A. Nowakowska. 'Nie wierzymy politykom.' *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 20 July 2001.
- 42 See: CBOS. *Wybory parlamentarne — Pewność głosowania, alternatywy wyborcze, elektoraty negatywne, uzasadnienia decyzji wyborcze*. CBOS: Warsaw. July 2001.
- 43 See: *Poglądy elektoratów partii politycznych*. This was to be found among Samoobrona voters, suggesting that this grouping had been correct to focus on this issue during the campaign.
- 44 See: *Poglądy elektoratów partii politycznych*.
- 45 See: 'Podziałów bez liku.'
- 46 See: 'Apel do poświadomości.'
- 47 See: *Poglądy elektoratów partii politycznych*.

- 48 See: CBOS. *Wybory parlamentarne — motywy głosowania, alternatywy wyborcze, elektoraty negatywne*. CBOS: Warsaw. May 2001.
- 49 See: *Wybory parlamentarne*. July 2001.
- 50 See: K. Naszkowska. 'Partia powiatowa.' *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 18 September 2001.
- 51 See: 'Apacze w sukmanach.'
- 52 See: 'Explaining Kwaśniewski's Landslide.' pp. 102–104.
- 53 See also: W. Załuska. 'Samochód w poślizgu: Rozmowa z socjologiem Tomaszem Żukowskim.' *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 25 October 2001.
- 54 Although, as noted above, this clearly does not appear to prevent the grouping from picking up significant support among centre-right and more clerical voters.
- 55 See: *Poglądy elektoratów partii politycznych*.
- 56 For an interesting argument as to why 'old' divisions may not disappear from Polish political discourse for some time see: P. Zaremba. 'Szkielety wychodzą z szafy.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 21 November 2001.
- 57 See: *Political Parties: Organisation and Power*. p264.
- 58 See: R.S. Katz and P. Mair, 'Changing Models of Party Organisation and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party,' *Party Politics*. Vol 1 No 1. 1995. pp. 5–28 (8).
- 59 See: 'PiS, czyli Lech Kaczyński.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 22 August 2001; and B. Waszkielewicz. 'Czyści, dyskrymowani.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 21 September 2001.
- 60 See: 'Od Olivii do Olivii.'
- 61 See: *Wybory parlamentarne*. July 2001. Although there is counter-evidence to suggest that leaders' personal qualities did not in fact play such an important role in determining voting behaviour. See, for example: 'Liderzy nieważni.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 20 July 2001.
- 62 As a broad coalition of a wide range of parties and groupings, the LPR attempted to present a number of different leaders to demonstrate its breadth of support on the radical right, much in the way that AWS had in 1997 to appeal to a broader centre-right electorate. On leader-orientation (or lack of it) in the 1997 campaign see: A. Szczerbiak. *Poles Together? The Emergence and Development of Political Parties in Post-communist Poland*. Budapest: CEU Press. 2001. pp. 145–149.
- 63 Szawiel, for example, argues that while left and right are highly salient political concepts for most Poles, they are still not associated with socio-economic issues. See: M. Subotić. 'Prawica ciągle się uczy: Rozmowa z Tadeuszem Szawielem, socjologiem z Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 25 September 2001.
- 64 See: J. Paradowska. 'Wybory po wyborach,' *Polityka*. 29 September 2001.





# The Post-communist Cleavage on the National and the Local Level in Poland

Mirosława Grabowska

First, the post-communist cleavage (and more precisely the cleavage: post-communist *versus* non- or anticommunist) will be analysed from the theoretical perspective. The conception of Lipset-Rokkan will be applied to the communist system, its imposition and collapse, as generating the deep and persistent social cleavage. Secondly, the idea of the post-communist cleavage will be related to empirical data from the national level in Poland. I will argue that this cleavage came to light as early as in the elections of 1989 and — despite changes on the political scene — lasts as hitherto. Next I will analyse the presence and activity of the post-communist cleavage on the local level. At the end I will consider the problem of the persistency of the post-communist cleavage — whether electoral successes of the left in the elections of 2000 and 2001 mean the end of the post-communist cleavage.

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## 1. The Interpretation of Lipset-Rokkan's Conception

I refer to the well-known theoretical framework of Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan, elaborated in the article "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments",<sup>1</sup> which describes the historical and social mechanisms of the formation and functioning of political parties in Western Europe. I attempt to interpret this conception, according to its spirit rather than its letter, considering communism as an event dividing the society in a manner similar to the divisions brought earlier by the Reformation, the national-democratic revolutions (which took place in Europe in the 18th and 19th century) and the industrial revolution. These three historical thresholds generated, according to Lipset and Rokkan,



societal divisions and political parties rooted in them. I believe communism to be an analogous event dividing the society, which was immersed in that system and since 1989 has only with difficulty been emerging from it. Both the installation of communism and the subsequent way out of it generated the societal divisions which shape the political attitudes, electoral behaviour and the whole party systems.

There is no space here for reconstructing the framework put forward by Lipset-Rokkan. In my interpretation of this conception I refer to the historical line it contains, which I try to emphasise and continue. In bearing with the historical character of my interpretation, I attach more importance to the problem of identity and its role in translating the societal divisions into political action.

However, why should the events from the distant West European past: the Reformation, the national-democratic revolutions, the industrial revolution shape party systems contemporary to Lipset and Rokkan? Why these particular events and not some other? Why not the social structure? In my opinion, this was due to the character of these events. They constituted a whole series of events, processes: long-term, violent and complex, played out on the level of elites and masses, tearing the biographies and lifestyles of whole communities and individual people, engaging human emotions, values and identities.

The Reformation (and Counter-Reformation) was such a process: long-term, complex and multidimensional in character, engaging human emotions, values and identities. It involved both institutions (the Roman Catholic church, other churches and sects, states, provinces, local self-government, universities and schools) and people, both the elites (spiritual, intellectual, political) and the "common folk" in towns and villages. New churches were created, borders were changed and new states established, old dynasties were abolished, old universities were reformed and new ones were founded. Subtle theological considerations and academic debates could lead to expulsion, being stripped of one's rights and excommunication, or even to the scaffold. The rulers killed and were killed themselves. Individuals were murdered, *lege artis* or treacherously, and masses were murdered, and these murders were committed spontaneously or in systematically wielded wars as by the soldiers of the Swedish king, Gustav II Adolf, who fought singing psalms. All this was done in the name of the "true faith", which was spread and enforced through all means: political and administrative, diplomatic and military, but also, as we would call it today, through propaganda. The pulpit, the university chair and, above all, print served the purpose of reaching the people with the reformed creed in order to induce and preserve the new religiousness. The

Bible was translated into national languages many times, and some translations contributed to the development of languages by becoming their canonical text. The number of editions and the circulation elicit surprise and respect even from today's perspective. At that time the printed leaflets were first published, as those after the appearance of Martin Luther at the parliament in Worms in 1521, which recorded his every word, every gesture, and even the fact that it was hot in the congregation hall. The posters attacking the Holy Mass, which covered the Parisian walls, indirectly drove Calvin out of France. The caricatures of Prince Alba, prompted by the devil and treading on the heads of beheaded Protestant leaders, probably contributed a lot to creating his black legend. Publications popularised the images of charismatic figures, martyrs and saints (literally: Thomas More became a saint), symbolic situations and sayings: heroic, such as Luther's "This is my position, I can take no other", or pragmatic, such as "Paris is well worth a Holy Mass" by Henry of Navarre. The Reformation entered biographies and lifestyles in many different ways: through political and administrative decisions, wars and migrations, but it also mattered who and for what was burned or beheaded on the local marketplace, who taught what in the local church, what this church looked like, whether the Bible was used or not, how one prayed, what one was instructed or ordered to do, how the neighbours lived. Protestant denominations not only made reading the Bible possible, but by ordering the faithful to read it, they made it the first and only source of discussion. The Bible, the preacher, the neighbourhood, local and supra-local identities; what "they" did to "us" (always shameful), and what "we" did to "them" (always justified, proper and leading to their salvation); faith and passion and hate; but also the systematic education organised by the ruling elites or the local or religious community... If all that lasts for years and generations, it inevitably becomes rooted: Geneva really became different from Paris, the Netherlands from Belgium, puritans from Roman Catholics. Large scale and local politics and everyday formative activity divided the societies. And since all these long-term processes went on with heated emotions and were right from the very beginning institutionalised in the form of new churches and denominations (which constituted a holistic entity composed of the doctrine, the church organisation and individual religiousness), the divisions became rooted in individual identities and turned out to be durable.

The national-democratic revolutions and the industrial revolution were similar events: long-term, violent, engaging emotions and identities. This is why they generated durable divisions, manifested in many spheres of social life, among them in the institutional sphere. Also later events



characterised by such qualities should generate durable divisions manifested in many areas of social life, among them in the institutional sphere.

## **2. Communism as the Fourth Event**

I claim that communism was another such event-process. It turned out to be long-lasting, it was complex and at times violent, and it evidently engaged human emotions, values and identities. There is no space and need here to recapitulate the history of Central European countries after World War II. However, there is no doubt that the communist system was supported, but also resisted from its very beginning, and the outbursts of social discontent or the attempted systemic reforms were present throughout the existence of this system, although they were manifested with different strength in different periods and in different countries. Its introduction, consolidation and development was, like the Reformation, a multidimensional process, which covered both institutions (institutions of state power and the economy, political parties and voluntary associations, churches, mass media, universities and schools) and people, both the elites (political, intellectual), and the “common folk” in towns and villages.

In Poland organised opposition existed from the very beginning. There was both legal opposition, first of all the Polish Peasant Party (Polish abbreviation — PSL),<sup>2</sup> which had 447,000 registered members by May 1946,<sup>3</sup> but also other parties and Roman Catholic circles, and the underground opposition, also armed (the National Army and its successor civilian organisation “Freedom and Independence”,<sup>4</sup> as well as those connected with the National Party: National Military Union and National Armed Forces — Polish Organisation<sup>5</sup>). However, even members of the legally active Polish Peasant Party were murdered,<sup>6</sup> sentenced to long-term prison, persecuted. Eventually, after the Polish Peasant Party lost the rigged 1947 elections, the PSL leader Stanisław Mikołajczyk left the country in disguise. The communists used every means to fight for power: political and non-political (forging the 1946 referendum and the 1947 elections), law-enforcement and criminal (arresting and eliminating their competitors with court sentences or even clandestine murders), but also through propaganda and social reforms (the agricultural reform, the opportunities for upward social mobility). The same means were used to consolidate the power and the system. Communism entered people’s biographies and lifestyles in many different ways: through political and economic decisions, through whatever happened in the workplace and at school, through what was mandated and propagated and through what was banned and restricted. In the latter category there were not only

independent political organisations and mass media, but also religion, sociology and jazz music. The policy of the ruling elites, propaganda and individual choices divided the people: some lost, some gained; some joined the communist party and tied their careers, their biographies with the system, while others did not; some gave up practicing religion (or did so secretly), others did not; for some the official media were enough, while others listened to Radio Free Europe, etc. The persistence of such a situation, periodically “heated up” by societal and political conflicts, reinforced the emerging cleavage and became rooted in the individual identities.

The Hungarian Uprising of 1956, which mainly played out in Budapest and which lasted for 12–13 days, is an example of a conflict with international impact. There were many factors, which caused the uprising to break out, but the essential one was the antagonism between the party and the security forces on one side and the society with national liberation aspirations on the other. The intervention of the Soviet troops restored communism in Hungary. The mass character of the Hungarian Uprising is beyond question. It is documented not only by regular street fighting and the scope of repression imposed later, but also by the scope of the emigration: 200,000 Hungarians (ca. 2% of the population) emigrated to the West.

The Prague Spring, which lasted from January till August 1968 is another example of such a conflict. In that case the basic fault line was between the Stalinist wing of the party and the reformers who enjoyed wide societal support. Once again an intervention (this time done by the Warsaw Pact troops) restored the communist *status quo*.

For Poland, a comparable experience was “Solidarity” and martial law. But, while pointing to the anti-communist side of the conflict, one must also remember the communist side: about millions of party members<sup>7</sup> whose privileges, posts, careers and well-being (also of their families) was tied to the persistence of the system.

These past historical events, as well as the events of the year 1989, the Autumn of Nations, show that, in the Central European countries at least, one could note many manifestations of deep communist — anti-communist cleavage rooted in individual identities.

### **3. The Post-communist Cleavage — Evidence of Electoral Data**

Whoever is not convinced by the historical arguments, will find “hard” sociological evidence in the analyses of Krzysztof Ostrowski and Adam Przeworski.<sup>8</sup> The authors analysed Polish electoral data from the period 1956–95, focusing on the 1980s and 1990s. They found out that the



structure of political cleavages crystallised under the communist system. Two types of cleavage were detected: the most important, political cleavage, which was best indicated by the opposing influence of the Communist Party<sup>9</sup> and the Catholic Church, and almost equally important the rural — urban cleavage.

In the local elections of 1984 as well as the parliamentary ones in 1985 and the local elections of 1988 the choice was only whether to vote (so the dependent variable was thus only turnout). Beginning with the referendum of 1987, in all the subsequent elections the structure of choices was both whether to vote and how to vote (so the dependent variable was thus a list of all the alternatives). It turned out that the political cleavage influenced the decision, whether to vote, and how to vote. Influences of the Communist Party and the Catholic Church were significant and striking — the Communist Party and the Catholic Church appeared almost equally influential and, needless to say, opposed organisations. Higher density of the Communist Party members (measured in 1988) favoured high turnout and higher density of priests (measured in 1990) was associated with lower turnout. What's more, the density of the Communist Party members influenced the support for the national list in the elections of 1989, for Cimoszewicz, the post-communist candidate in the presidential elections of 1990, for the Alliance of Democratic Left<sup>10</sup> (Polish abbreviation — SLD) in the parliamentary elections of 1991 and of 1993. But what is even more striking is that the pattern of support for Aleksander Kwaśniewski, the post-communist candidate, during the second round of the presidential elections of 1995 was similar to that of the turnout in the elections of 1984 through 1988. It is clear that the legacy of the Communist Party membership and the density of priests explain best the differences in the voting patterns in the second round of the 1995 presidential elections and best distinguish the support for Aleksander Kwaśniewski from that of Lech Wałęsa. Authors conclude that this is the same cleavage that divided Polish society under communism.

#### **4. The Post-communist Cleavage — Survey Evidence**

My empirical research and analysis lead to similar conclusions. But let me first explain some terminology. In the historical part of this presentation I have discussed the communist-anticommunist cleavage. Ostrowski and Przeworski regarded the opposition between the Communist Party and the Catholic Church as the best indicator of the political cleavage crystallized under the communist system. I think that from 1980, the role of the non- or anticommunist side and the opposition toward the

Communist Party was taken over by “Solidarity”. That is why the opposition Communist Party *versus* “Solidarity” should be used and after 1989 the opposition post-communist *versus* post-Solidarity (that is what I have in mind, when speaking about the post-communist cleavage).<sup>11</sup>

Let us return to the main area of interest and let me start with the little known research results of the Center for Public Opinion Research (CBOS).<sup>12</sup> The results state that the members of the Communist Party in the years 1984–85 in comparison with non-members: better evaluated the legacy of Communist Poland; better assessed their and society’s economic situation. They were also convinced, that the government would manage the crisis. According to them, Communist Poland was a democratic country and the government had the right to limit civic freedoms in the name of “higher priorities”, while the Church had no right to have an opinion in political matters. The members of the Communist Party — more than two million by the end of the 80s — did not disappear suddenly in 1989 and have certainly not changed their convictions from day to day.

The communist-anticommunist cleavage was visible during the election campaign in 1989. Generally however, it is said that these elections were not of a political character, that they were a plebiscite on the unpopularity of the government in power. I do not agree with this interpretation — the election of 1989 was strongly rooted in the past, had ideological and political significance, and the choices then made defined strongly the *spectrum* of future political trends. According to the results<sup>13</sup> (to no one’s surprise) the members of the Communist Party did not vote for “Solidarity” in the elections of 1989. Those who did vote for “Solidarity” were people attending mass, listening to foreign broadcasting stations (like Radio Free Europe), members of “Solidarity” and people who thought that Poland was all the better for the collapse of communism.

It is worth mentioning that these characteristics are habits of a lifetime (such as religious practices or listening to foreign broadcasting stations) or significant memberships (to the Communist Party or to “Solidarity”), which are visible in the general attitude toward the communist era. For relevant dependencies, see Table 1 of the Appendix.

The “sides”, which crystallised at that time, brought together significant parts of society and although they were not and are not “solid” — in their composition, number and power changes — the division is of a more or less permanent character. This can be seen in the dependencies from the way people voted in 1989 in the manner of voting in the succeeding elections, presented in Tables 2 to 5 of the Appendix. The elections of 1989 therefore, cannot be regarded as non-political or only situational. Voting



for “Solidarity” or for the “party-governmental” side was a political, ideological choice and a matter of identity formation.

In Tables 2 to 5 one can see the continuation of the sides which were identified and crystallised in the elections of 1989. These sides were characterised by a different dynamic. Solidarity until 1995 did not create a single political representation and dispersed the social support won in 1989: in 1993 it did not support clearly one political party and the situation did not change until 1995, when during the presidential elections there was no one “Solidarity” candidate. The party-governmental side developed differently from 1989: in 1993 it accumulated its support for Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD) and this build-up was consolidated in autumn 1995, when two-thirds of those, who in 1989 voted for the party-governmental side were planning to vote for Kwaśniewski.

It certainly did not happen automatically. The original division of 1989 was and is organised by the competing and often opposed political forces: most of all political parties, but also trade unions and other organisations. In the first half of the 90s SdRP<sup>14</sup> and organisations connected with this party effectively “cultivated” its side of the divide. An important institutional factor is that once an institution is created it generates a significant “gravity field”, which influences — in return — society, creating human loyalties and identity. SdRP and SLD managed to do this. Until now the post-Solidarity parties failed to do so.

After the presidential elections in 1995 Kwaśniewski, many politicians of SdRP and even more publicists, announced that the past was no longer of any importance. After the presidential elections of 2000 and parliamentary elections of 2001 the statement that the legacy of the past was overcome was redundantly repeated. Is the post-communist cleavage — so clearly visible directly after 1989 — disappearing in the second half of the nineties? The analysis of data, encompassing this time-span until the year 2001, presented in Tables 6 to 9 of the Appendix, shows, that this is not certain. The post-communist cleavage is visible in successive elections, in the process of gaining support of political parties’ past electorates, through creating a loyalty to a party, to the formation of faithful electorates. (According to Lipset and Rokkan a full or mature cleavage, is one in which the political parties sides are rooted). However, the process develops differently on the post-communist and post-solidarity sides. In the elections of 1997 SLD took over 90% of its electorate from 1993, while Solidarity Electoral Action (Polish abbreviation — AWS)<sup>15</sup> — 81% supporters of right-wing parties from 1993 (Table 6 in the Appendix). In this case the difference between them was small and in the end AWS did win the elections. The barrier came with presidential elections: Aleksander

Kwaśniewski gained 98% of SLD supporters from 1997 and 49% of AWS supporters from 1997, while Marian Krzaklewski and other right-wing oriented candidates collected all together only 33% of AWS electorate votes. It is not a great consolation, that these proportions for Union of Freedom (Polish abbreviation — UW)<sup>16</sup> and PSL were even worst (Table 7 in the Appendix). Such a personality like Kwaśniewski is for a political party a real treasure — 62% of his electorate from 2000 voted in 2001 in the parliamentary elections for SLD (Table 8 in the Appendix). Meanwhile, disagreements within political parties are disastrous: AWS had fallen apart before the parliamentary elections and only 48% of the AWS electorate from 1997 voted in 2001 for one of the parties, which were created after the partition of AWS. In comparison, 85% of the SLD electorate from 1997, voted also for SLD in 2001 (Table 9 in the Appendix). The post-Solidarity side therefore has a problem with institutionalisation and it was weaker and less effective. But the post-communist cleavage exists: with the exception of the last presidential elections<sup>17</sup> the situation was such, that it was highly probable that the electorate of a party (or a family of parties) would vote for it or for its candidate. Voting for a party from the opposite side of the cleavage was very rare. This means, that the post-communist cleavage on the national level persists.

## 5. The Post-communist Cleavage on the Local Level

I will try to diagnose if the post-communist cleavage functions also on the local level. I will use here two areas of research.<sup>18</sup> The first one is from 1995 and it concerns party organisations and leaders at local level of Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland, Union of Labor,<sup>19</sup> Union of Freedom and Christian National Union<sup>20</sup> in four selected cities with a population of 40,000 inhabitants, but placed in different regions of the country. Information about party organisations was collected and the leaders were interviewed. In addition, interviews were also conducted with the mayor, the chief editor of the local newspaper and a parish priest, information concerning the city itself was also gathered. The second series of research was carried out in 1996 and was limited to interviews with leaders of SdRP, UP, UW and ZChN and with leaders of the Polish Peasant Party, the newly-formed Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland,<sup>21</sup> and on information about the representative bodies of these parties in the gminas of Warsaw. In all, 77 interviews were conducted, including 65 with local party leaders.<sup>22</sup>

The main aim of this research was the presentation of the function of parties in the local environment, in which local organisations remain an



integral part of their “maternal” parties (vertical dimension), but act on the local political scene and in the local social environment (horizontal dimension). Authors were interested both in political parties as organisations, as well as in their members. And although the research did not concentrate on the post-communist cleavage, the abundance of collected material allows me to address this problem as well.

The local party organisations were diverse — the SdRP was very distinct: wealthier than others, with a more developed organisational structure, as well as more cohesive (at least their internal conflicts were not externally exposed). The contrast with the centre-right wing was even more evident, because the local activists of SdRP were the only ones who did not discuss the internal party divides or conflicts and did not question the political moves or opinions of the party representatives at the national level. In all the other parties, divisions and conflicts were present: from personal conflicts through issues concerning leadership and through presidential candidates to political conflicts (in regard to strategy).

SdRP was willing to cooperate with other parties at local level. However, in this respect there was a certain characteristic asymmetry: the pragmatic SdRP was ready to create coalitions with different groups, but the more rigorous post-solidarity parties rejected — due to historical reasons — SdRP as a possible coalition partner. The local leaders of SdRP admitted, that even on the local level the origin of their party made any sort of cooperation with groups from the Solidarity milieu impossible. These activists complained that SdRP was associated with the Communist Party (PUWP), that SdRP was perceived as the heir of PUWP etc. It is difficult however, not to see the continuity between those two parties: SdRP was created during the last meeting of the Communist Party (11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of PUWP); additionally, 80% and 86% of the delegates at the party meetings of SdRP in, respectively, 1993 and 1995 were members of the Communist Party<sup>23</sup> and out of 13 of the local SdRP leaders — our interviewees — 11 were members of the Communist Party (lack of data about one).<sup>24</sup>

Characteristic was the language, which was used by the majority of local leaders to speak about the relations with other parties. In general they used a so-called “front line” terminology and related to an evident situation of competition or even animosity. Often invectives were used. The denotations of “blacks” *versus* “reds” were used as descriptive and the difficult to translate terms of “comis” (komuchy) and “solidaris” (solidaruchy) as pejorative. But as offensive can be regarded the mere underlining that the others are “also” human, that there are some normal people among them, with some sense, that someone — against all expectations — behaved like a human being. Thus it is even more the language

used by the interviewees than the content, which expressed the attitudes of the local activists to their opponents and the strength of the common stereotypes.

The local level party activists are of special interest here, because they are an important asset of the party, maybe actually the most important one. In a situation when the political party membership remains at a very low level and parties are surrounded by social dislike or in the best case — indifference, each local activist is of great importance. That is why we researched extensively the biographies of the local leaders, their motives and attitudes. From the results one can conclude that the activists of all the parties addressed in the research were rather similar — the majority were middle-aged or elderly men, well educated, employed at high, independent posts. Although there are not many differences in regard to social and demographic characteristics, the differences in their political biographies, in their political experiences and membership, in the hierarchy of values and ideological convictions are so great, that one can regard them as a cleavage. The majority of the local leaders of SdRP were members of the Communist Party before 1989, while the local leaders of the centre-right wing did not belong to the Communist Party (no one from ROP and one person from ZChN and UW) and a part belonged to “Solidarity”.<sup>25</sup> It is thus no surprise that the local leaders were divided according to their attitudes toward the past and responsibility for it. The majority of the local leaders of SdRP, with their “systemic” biographies, practically glorified Communist Poland and were against any type of accountability for the past. Such strong attitudes were absent in the other parties. At the other pole were the local leaders of ROP, ZChN and partly UW, who before 1989 belonged to “Solidarity” or took part in opposition activities. Their opinions about the communist past of Poland were critical or balanced and their attitude toward holding to account for past activities can be summed up in a motto “prosecute and punish”. There were also activists avoiding clear and unequivocal judgements. These belonged mainly to UP and partly to UW — they saw a discontinuity between Communist Poland and the present democracy but did not see any possibility of being held accountable for the past — their attitude toward this question can be summed up as “forgive and forget”. The attitudes toward Communist Poland and possibly holding accountable for the past does clearly create a divide between the local leaders of the different parties and evokes strong emotions.

Cleavages concerning religious issues and the Church were present at the local level, but in a milder form than on the national level (where there was the battle for the concordat).



What were the relations between the local party organisations and the communities in which they were functioning? Some of the activists were doubtful in regard to the sense of party existence on the local level. Many were questioning this opinion, pointing to the benefits of it to the party itself and to the local community. Apart from this debate, local party leaders defined goals and strategies for implementation. They pointed to target groups, social groups and categories, which their parties addressed, as well as to the type of activities undertaken by their organisations in the local environment during the elections to gain supporters and to strengthen and develop party structures. The ingenuity of the activists was great: from the organisation of discussion clubs and cafes, through cultural activities, to animation of district or school self-governance. In this area SdRP was also distinct — its activists did not question the parties activities on the local level, they wanted to represent the local community, did not complain about the passivity of the inhabitants, but they themselves came out with initiatives (meetings with party leaders, with different groups of interests etc.). The weaker the position of the party in the given gmina or city, the more doubts, complaints and less activities there were.

The outlined image of parties in local environments represents a certain stage in the development of Polish political parties and is currently of a historical character. Between 1995–1996 many things changed several times. However, I assume that the disproportion in organisational basis and in discipline, as well as effectiveness of activities of local leaders of SLD and the post-solidarity leaders continues, even becomes greater. This will be possible to analyse, because the research from 1995–96 is repeated at the moment.

## **6. The Future of the Post-communist Cleavage**

In spite of the successes of the left-wing in the elections of 2000 and 2001, the post-communist cleavage exists. To a large extent Kwaśniewski managed to overcome it in 2000, but the cleavage showed up again in the parliamentary elections in 2001. It does not mean that nothing changes. In the past three or four years this division was weakened by the fragility of the post-solidarity side, that is the centre-right wing. The politics of the AWS — UW government, and later the AWS government — setting aside the issue of how it will be judged in the future — it was negatively evaluated by public opinion and was rejected during the elections of 2001. The centre is also divided into a weakened UW and a newly created Civic Platform.<sup>26</sup> One can have the impression that the post-solidarity side is undergoing a deep decomposition, and that this process will diminish the

post-communist cleavage. There are other factors, which can also influence the weakening of this cleavage, such as integration with the European Union and challenges linked to this process — the right-wing is already divided in regard to the issue of integration. The new situation of Poland, new problems, weakness of centre-right wing is a strong argument against the permanence of the post-communist cleavage.

However, there are arguments supporting this thesis as well. *Primarily*, it is the strength of SLD. Political scientists claim, that the rule “winner takes all” causes a bipolarity in politics. This rule is not inscribed into the electoral law, but it is openly implemented in the political practices of SLD. What is happening on the national level will be repeated and mimed at local level. In the long-term this will be favourable for the cooperation of centre-right wing parties and groups, and at some point it can lead to integration. *Secondly*, it is the existence of a right-wing electorate. During the worst parliamentary elections three million people voted for right-wing parties and political groups. Even when the politicians are quarrelling, and the right-wing parties are divided and weak, there is a potential electorate to be won. *Thirdly*, there are staff members of the right-wing political parties. It is true that the staff of SLD is more numerous and has more discipline. But in the past 12 years the right-wing parties have developed committed, experienced local activists, well educated and learned in the art of self-government.<sup>27</sup> These people — at the moment frustrated and discouraged — will not work for SLD. If they will not withdraw from public activity, they will create a certain lobby in their parties for a specific reform or renewing and continuation of activities. *Fourthly*, not only on the level of politicians and activists, but also on the level of the electorate, a right-wing ideological identification was created. It seems that it is sufficiently clear and durable to search for an institutionalised and political form. *Finally*, there is the Catholic Church, which has already learned to keep out of politics, but certainly has an influence on them: directly — on electorate behaviour and indirectly — through ties to the right-wing ideological identification. In addition, the recent radical secular and anticlerical circles in SLD provoke the Church to take a stand in regard to such issues as the anti-abortion act, taxation of the Church etc. If the current leadership of SLD will not manage to restrain anticlerical tendencies, the Church will be forced to enter the political arena and it will support, certainly, its right wing.

Therefore, the answer to the question about the durability of the post-communist cleavage will have to begin, as always in the social sciences — from the phrase “it depends”. If attitudes toward EU integration will not be incorporated by the post-communist cleavage (and the pro-European



attitudes of SLD and the division of the right-wing parties on this issue indicate, that it will not be incorporated easily) and for some time it dominates all other issues, this will then influence the weakening of this divide. In addition, if SLD restrains its appetite for the post-electoral booty, if the right-wing remains weak and divided, not mobilising its activists and not appealing to the right-wing electorate, if the Church is left in peace, then all these factors will weaken the post-communist cleavage. In politics nothing exists permanently and certainly — if for politicians and people this divide stops being significant and mobilising, then it will disappear. But the number of conditions that have to be fulfilled to overcome this cleavage, are so great, that I can risk saying that this will not happen in the near future.

## 7. Appendix

**Table 1. Some correlates of voting for "Solidarity" in 1989**

<i>Voting for "Solidarity" in 1989 and:</i>	<i>Gamma</i>	<i>chi<sup>2</sup></i>
PUWP membership	-.62	0000 <sup>a</sup>
"Solidarity" membership	.58	0000
listening to Radio Free Europe	.23	0073
religious practices	.38	0000
Poland is all the better for the collapse of communism	.31	0000

Source: IS 1995

<sup>a</sup>The relationship was calculated for 19-year olds or older in 1989 (born in 1970 or earlier)

**Table 2. The election of 1989 and presidential elections of 1990 (%)**

<i>In the first round of the presidential elections of 1990 he/she voted for:</i>	<i>In 1989 he/she voted for:</i>		
	<i>"Solidarity"</i> (68%)	<i>PUWP side</i> (18%)	<i>Doesn't remember</i> (14%)
R. Bartoszcze (the peasant candidate)	2	3	1
<b>W. Cimoszewicz</b> (the post-communist candidate)	3	29	7
T. Mazowiecki	13	18	14
L. Moczulski	2	2	4
S. Tymiński	8	23	15
<b>L. Wałęsa</b>	68	15	15
Doesn't remember	5	10	10

Source: IS 1995

**Table 3. The elections of 1989 and the parliamentary elections of 1993 (%)**

<i>In the parliamentary elections of 1993 he/she voted for:</i>	<i>In 1989 he/she voted for:</i>		
	<i>"Solidarity" (66%)</i>	<i>PUWP side (20%)</i>	<i>Doesn't remember (15%)</i>
(post-communist) SLD (15)	6	55	10
(peasant) PSL (14)	15	9	15
(liberal) UD or KLD (10) <sup>a</sup>	10	9	5
(social democratic) UP (7)	7	9	4
parties of the right (8) <sup>b</sup>	11	0	4
KPN (3)	4	1	0
"Solidarity" (16)	25	0	7
UPR (2)	2	0	0
Party "X" or "Self-defence" (2)	1	3	4
Other parties (1)	1	1	1
Doesn't remember (23)	19	13	50

Source: IS 1995

<sup>a</sup>Democratic Union united with Liberal-Democratic Congress into Union of Freedom in 1994.

<sup>b</sup>The category "Parties of the right" includes the following parties:

Katolicki Komitet Wyborczy "Ojczyzna", BBWR, PC, PSL-PL and Koalicja dla Rzeczypospolitej. These parties got less than 2% of votes and located themselves on the right part of the political *spectrum*.

**Table 4. The elections of 1989 and preferences for candidates in the presidential elections of 1995 (%)**

<i>In 1995 he/she preferred voted for:</i>	<i>In 1989 he/she voted for:</i>		
	<i>"Solidarity" (67%)</i>	<i>PUWP side (19%)</i>	<i>Doesn't remember (14%)</i>
H. Gronkiewicz-Waltz (11)	12	3	9
J. Kuroń (8)	9	4	6
<b>A. Kwaśniewski (25)</b> <b>(the post-communist candidate)</b>	15	64	21
J. Olszewski (3)	4	2	1
W. Pawlak (4) (the peasant candidate)	4	2	5
<b>L. Wałęsa (18)</b>	26	1	11
T. Zieliński (7)	6	11	10
"I don't know yet" (18)	15	9	33

Source: IS 1995



**Table 5. The post-communist electorates in 1989 and 1995 compared with the post-solidarity electorates in 1989 and 1995 (%)**

<i>In 1995 he/she preferred voted for:</i>	<i>In 1989 he/she voted for:</i>		
	<i>"Solidarity"</i> (67%)	<i>PUWP side</i> (19%)	<i>Doesn't remember</i> (14%)
Candidates of the right (H. Gronkiewicz-Waltz + L.Kaczyński + L.Moczulski + J.Olszewski )	19	7	11
Candidates of the right + L.Wałęsa	45	8	22
Candidates of the right + L.Wałęsa + J.Kuroń	54	12	28
<b>A. Kwaśniewski (25)</b>	15	64	21

Source: IS 1995

**Table 6. The parliamentary elections of 1993 and the parliamentary elections of 1997 (%)**

<i>In the parliamentary elections of 1993 he/she voted for:</i>	<i>In the parliamentary elections of 1997 he/she voted for:</i>				
	<i>SLD (41)</i>	<i>PSL (8)</i>	<i>UW (10)</i>	<i>AWS (36)</i>	<i>Other parties</i> (6)
SLD (39)	90	1		4	4
PSL (9)	22	62		11	6
UD or KLD (10) <sup>a</sup>	15	2	66	11	5
Parties of the right (39) <sup>b</sup>	4	4	7	81	5
Other parties (3)	32	13		21	35

Source: PGSW 2001

<sup>a</sup>Democratic Union united with Liberal-Democratic Congress into Union of Freedom in 1994<sup>b</sup>The category "Parties of the right" includes — as before — the following parties: Katolicki Komitet Wyborczy "Ojczyzna", BBWR, PC, PSL-PL and Koalicję dla Rzeczypospolitej and additionally also "Solidarity" and KPN**Table 7. The parliamentary elections of 1997 and the presidential elections of 2000 (%)**

<i>In the parliamentary elections of 1997 he/she voted for:</i>	<i>In the first round of the presidential elections of 2000 he/she voted for:</i>				
	<i>Aleksander Kwaśniewski</i> (72)	<i>Jarosław Kalinowski</i> (3)	<i>Andrzej Olechowski</i> (10)	<i>Marian Krzaklewski or another candidate of the right<sup>a</sup></i> (15)	<i>Another candidate</i> (1)
SLD (39)	98	1		1	
PSL (8)	60	25	5	10	
UW (11)	53		35	9	3
AWS (36)	49	2	14	33	2
Other parties (7)	75		10	14	2

Source: PGSW 2001

<sup>a</sup>To Marian Krzaklewski the following candidates of the right were added: Jan Łopuszański, Jan Olszewski and Lech Wałęsa.

**Table 8. The presidential elections of 2000 and the parliamentary elections of 2001 (%)**

<i>In the first round of the presidential elections of 2000 he/she voted for:</i>	<i>In the parliamentary elections of 2001 he/she voted for:</i>					
	<i>SLD</i> (46)	<i>PSL</i> (9)	<i>UW or PO</i> (15) <sup>b</sup>	<i>Parties of the right</i> (21) <sup>c</sup>	<i>Self-defence</i> (9)	<i>Other parties</i> (1)
Aleksander Kwaśniewski (72)	62	8	9	12	9	1
Jarosław Kalinowski (3)	10	52	11	16	12	
Andrzej Olechowski (10)		2	61	31	6	
Marian Krzaklewski or another candidate of the right (13) <sup>a</sup>	5	6	17	63	7	2
Another candidate (1)	24	19	5	45	8	

Source: PGSW 2001

<sup>a</sup>To Marian Krzaklewski the following candidates of the right were added: Jan Łopuszański, Jan Olszewski and Lech Wałęsa.

<sup>b</sup>UW and PO are included into one category due to their programmatic closeness.

<sup>c</sup>The category "Parties of the right" included: AWSP, PiS, "Alternative" and LPR.

**Table 9. The parliamentary elections of 1997 and the parliamentary elections of 2001 (%)**

<i>In the parliamentary elections of 1997 he/she voted for:</i>	<i>In the parliamentary elections of 2001 he/she voted for:</i>					
	<i>SLD</i> (45)	<i>PSL</i> (7)	<i>UW or PO</i> (16) <sup>a</sup>	<i>Parties of the right</i> (22) <sup>b</sup>	<i>Self-defence</i> (9)	<i>Other parties</i> (1)
SLD (39)	85	3	3	4	4	1
PSL (9)	8	45	10	8	30	
UW (11)	21	3	57	17	1	
AWS (35)	18	4	20	48	10	1
Other parties	39		15	17	26	3

Source: PGSW 2001

<sup>a</sup>UW and PO are included into one category due to their programmatic closeness.

<sup>b</sup>The category "Parties of the right" included: AWSP, PiS, "Alternative" and LPR.

## Notes

- 1 Lipset S. M., S. Rokkan, *Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction*. In: Lipset S. M., S. Rokkan (eds), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, New York: The Free Press 1967.
- 2 Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe.
- 3 See: Friszke A., *Opozycja polityczna w PRL* [Political opposition in the communist Poland]. London: Aneks 1994, p. 30. It is worth to note that a sister Hungarian peasant party, the Smallholders' Party won the elections in November 1945 with 56% of the votes.
- 4 Armia Krajowa — AK and "Wolność i Niezawisłość" — WiN, respectively.
- 5 Stronnictwo Narodowe — SN and Narodowe Zjednoczenie Wojskowe, and Narodowe Siły Zbrojne — Organizacja Polska, respectively.



- 6 In the period before the 1947 elections in Poland about 150 PSL activists were killed, according to incomplete calculations. Friszke A., *Opozycja polityczna w PRL*, p. 34.
- 7 In 1986 there were 2,216,000 party members in Poland, making 5.7 percent of the total population (the share of party members in the adult population would result in an even higher proportion), 1,675,000 party members in Czechoslovakia (10.8%), 871,000 in Hungary (8.2%). Among European communist countries the highest percentage was in Romania (15.6%) and East Germany (13.8%), the lowest in Albania (4.9%), Poland (5.7%) and Soviet Union (6.6%). See: Kornai J., *The Socialist System: the political economy of communism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1992, p. 35.
- 8 Ostrowski K., A. Przeworski, *The Structure of Partisan Conflict in Poland*. In: Jasińska-Kania A., J. Raciborski (eds), *Nation — Power — Society. Essays in honour of Jerzy J. Wiatr*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe "Scholar" 1996, pp. 185–206. The authors conduct an ecological analysis applying the logit model.
- 9 Its proper name was Polish United Workers' Party — PUWP; in Polish: Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza — PZPR.
- 10 Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej, hence SLD. In 1990 the Alliance of the Democratic Left was organised of a variety of post-communist organisations by the communist successor party, Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland — Socjaldemokracja Rzeczypospolitej Polski, hence SdRP. From 1990 to 1999 there were: the political party — SdRP and the electoral coalition — the Alliance of the Democratic Left. In 1999 Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland was dissolved and the Alliance of the Democratic Left was registered as a "regular" political party.
- 11 Discussion remains as to how much it is the same but a differently named division. I think however, that it is not the same, merely due to the fact that it can be freely expressed in democratic politics.
- 12 Członkowie partii a inne segmenty opinii społecznej [Party Members and Other Segments of the Public Opinion]. Warszawa: CBOS 1985.
- 13 Tables 1–5 are adopted from: Grabowska M., Szawiel T., *Budowanie demokracji. Podziały społeczne, partie polityczne i społeczeństwo obywatelskie w postkomunistycznej Polsce* [The Making of Democracy. Social Cleavages, Political Parties and Civil Society in Post-communist Poland]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN 2001.
- 14 See: footnote 10.
- 15 Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność — AWS — was organised in 1996 as a coalition of Solidarity (the trade union) and several post-solidarity political parties and associations. It collapsed in 2001. Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność — AWS — was organised in 1996 as a coalition of Solidarity (the trade union) and several post-solidarity political parties and associations. It collapsed in 2001.
- 16 Unia Wolności.
- 17 Kwaśniewski managed to take over from the post-solidarity side a significant part of its electorate, but it was partly situational (very weak candidates of the right-wing) and I do not suppose this will be a lasting situation, because there will not be another Kwaśniewski.

- 18 Authors: Mirosława Grabowska, Tadeusz Szawiel, Krystyna Ewa Sielawa — Kolbowska.
- 19 Unia Pracy — UP.
- 20 Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe — ZChN.
- 21 Ruch Odbudowy Polski — ROP.
- 22 The results of this research are presented in : Grabowska M., T. Szawiel (eds), *Korzenie demokracji. Partie polityczne w środowisku lokalnym* [Roots of Democracy. Political Parties in Local Communities]. Warszawa: ISP PAN 2000.
- 23 Grabowska M., Szawiel T., *Budowanie demokracji*, p. 362.
- 24 Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz A., *Biografie — motywacje lokalnych działaczy partyjnych. Podobieństwa czy różnice?* [Biographies — motivations of local party activists. Similarities or differences?] In: Grabowska M., T. Szawiel (eds), *Korzenie demokracji*, p. 87.
- 25 Similar results were found in the research from 1995, when the delegates to the party meetings of SdRP, UP, UW and ZChN were interviewed: similar in regard to social and demographic characteristics they differed in their political biographies (more than 8 for 10 delegates of SdRP used to be members of the Communist Party and more than 6 for the 10 delegates of UW and ZChN — of “Solidarity” and according to their worldview (laic — delegates of SdRP and religious — delegates of ZChN). See: Grabowska M., Szawiel T., *Budowanie demokracji*, pp. 358–363.
- 26 Platforma Obywatelska — PO.
- 27 The Foundation in Support of Local Democracy announced in March 2002, that half a million local government officials attended their training — of course, not only from the right-wing, but also from it.

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- Grabowska M., T. Szawiel (eds), *Korzenie demokracji. Partie polityczne w środowisku lokalnym* [Roots of Democracy. Political Parties in Local Communities]. Warszawa: ISP PAN 2000.
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# Local Government and Local Politics





## Partisan Cleavages in Local Governments in Poland After 1990

Paweł Swianiewicz<sup>1</sup>

The role of party politics in Polish local governments and its consequences for implemented policies have not been the subject of comprehensive analysis yet. Most of Polish local government studies still naively (and silently) assume that party politics on a local level is not important and obvious facts being in contradiction with that assumption, are treated as embarrassing distortions rather than a natural development of local politics.

Nevertheless, party politics is more and more important in Polish local governments. Although many analyses across the world suggest the decline in traditional party politics oriented towards ideological differences (see for example Clark-Lipset 1991, Franklin et al. 1992, the Clark's concept of the New Political Culture in Clark, Hofmman-Martinot 1998 and many others) parties remain important political institutions (also on a local level) even if their ideological sharpness has largely disappeared. Still, the vast majority of councillors in many countries are elected from party lists (see for example for Scandinavia: Sundberg 1991; for United Kingdom Stoker 1988). One may argue that in Poland (as in some other countries of Central and Eastern Europe) the political scene is extremely unstable — with new parties created and disappearing every year, many splits, merges etc. Political parties which are in crisis in several countries, are especially weak in Poland. Data presented in Table 1 suggest party membership in Poland belongs to the lowest among European states.

Some authors also claim that in contemporary Polish politics the traditional left-right dimension seems to be irrelevant and differences between parties are often difficult to define (for example Jasiewicz 1992). The picture is even more chaotic on a local level than in central level politics, and in such circumstances it is extremely difficult to draw a coherent analytical framework. It should be added that Polish local government



**Table 1. Party members as percentage of voters**

	<i>Year</i>	<i>Total membership base</i>	<i>Membership/ Electorate ratio (%)</i>
Austria	1999	1,031,052	17.66
Finland	1998	400,615	9.65
Norway	1997	242,022	7.31
Greece	1998	600,000	6.77
Belgium	1999	480,804	6.55
Switzerland	1997	293,000	6.38
Sweden	1998	365,588	5.54
Denmark	1998	205,382	5.14
Slovakia	2000	165,277	4.11
Italy	1998	1974,040	4.05
Portugal	2000	346,504	3.99
Czech Republic	1999	319,800	3.94
Spain	2000	1,131,250	3.42
Ireland	1998	86,000	3.14
Germany	1999	1,780,173	2.93
Holland	2000	294,469	2.51
Hungary	1999	173,600	2.15
United Kingdom	1998	840,000	1.92
France	1999	615,219	1.57
<b>Poland</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>326,500</b>	<b>1.15</b>
<b>Mean</b>			<b>4.99</b>

Source: Mair, van Biezen (2001) quoted after Walecki (2002)

reform has been dominated by the anti-party ideology, assuming that the presence of parties in local politics is something harmful and, as far as possible, should be avoided. Quite recently, as a part of the discussion on the electoral system in the 2002 local elections, Polish main newspapers published several articles which were focused on one question: local government — partisan or civic? In almost all of them, it was silently assumed that the answer was obvious — civic is better than partisan. The famous slogan says that “the hole in the bridge is not political”, although some critics of such an approach indicate that the way bridges are managed may have a political background. The second assumption says that civic is opposed to partisan and — as a consequence — the only real issue is how to structure the electoral rules to decrease the influence of political parties.

In this paper we try to ask a fundamental question, whether political parties which are active in Polish municipalities differ in policy preferences and policy outputs or is the only difference between them related to personal composition, friendships and animosities among local political leaders?

This paper is not able to fill the gap in our knowledge completely, but its aim is to indicate main areas requiring further research in the future and to present some preliminary findings based on tests of some research

hypothesis. Only to a limited extent does the paper bring new empirical analysis, but it tries to collect “pieces of information” included in various existing publications on local politics. The paper will discuss the following aspects of local party politics:

- Importance of political parties in 1990, 1994 and 1998 local elections (based on election data, turn-over of mayors after elections, as well as CBOS<sup>2</sup> survey on the role of party preference in voters’ decisions);
- Importance of parties in local politics according to mayors’ declarations (based on LDI Project<sup>3</sup> surveys conducted in 1991 and 1997);
- Importance of party cleavages for the variation of local policies (based on 1994 analysis of policy preferences of candidates’ in local election and on the analysis of the variation of 1994<sup>4</sup> and 2000 local tax policies);
- Existence (or non-existence) of party political clientelism in the financing of local governments in Poland. General purpose grants are based on a set of objective criteria, but is there any evidence that these criteria have been manipulated by governing coalitions to support its political allies in local governments? Even more likely such clientelism may occur in allocation of some specific grants which are not based on any objective criteria. Is there any evidence of such phenomenon?

The paper focuses almost entirely on municipal (gmina) level of government, leaving aside upper (county and regional) tiers of sub-national government. There are two main arguments which justify such an approach. First of all, the history of municipal government is much longer (over 10 years against just three years history of county and regional tiers). Second, municipal governments still have budgets which are several times larger than those of county or regional governments, so their policies and their decision-making processes are simply much more important for citizens and for the political system of the whole country.

## 1. Parties in Local Elections

Even without quoting precise data we can clearly distinguish between the character of the three sets of local elections: in 1990, 1994 and 1998.

The 1990 elections were organised just at the beginning of the Polish political transformation and could be summarised as non-party elections. In 1990, the old (post-communist) parties were mostly compromised and new ones had not enough time to develop. Local elections were dominated by Civic Committees (*Komitety Obywatelskie*) rooted in the Solidarity



movement. Kowalczyk (1991) quotes data informing and Civic Committees won over 40% of all seats in local councils. Political parties were able to win (either independently or in coalitions) only about 8% of seats, and almost 40% were won by independent candidates. The only party which received a significant share of mandates in the municipal council (about 6%) was a Peasants' Party (PSL). The low share of party councillors winning the elections may be related to the fact that only 23% of councillors elected in 1990 had ever served as councillors before the 1990 political turn-over ("Radni pierwszej kadencji" 1994), most of the remaining 77% came from the opposition movement which at the beginning of the 1990s had not yet started to organise political parties.

Independent candidates had much better chances in small municipalities and there were two factors which influenced this phenomenon. First was the electoral system — proportional in cities with a population over 40,000 and majority system with one councillor elected in every ward in smaller municipalities. The majority system was giving many more chances to independent candidates. The second factor was related to the weakness, or sometimes even non-existence, of party organisations in small municipalities.

The 1994 elections may be characterised as hidden partisan. In large cities the politicisation of the election was a very clear trend. In most of the cities with a proportional system, the majority of seats in local councils were divided between three blocks: the SLD (post-communist social-democrats, often in coalition with the PSL), the Democratic Union (at that moment the strongest of the parties which emerged from the Solidarity movement) and coalitions of smaller rightist parties. Such a situation produced room for a variety of local coalitions. The relative balance between the blocks was a reason for a very long and difficult process of the election of executive bodies. For example, in Warsaw it took almost three months to elect the mayor.

In the scale of the whole country about 30%, but in medium and big cities over 60% of candidates in the election were nominated by political parties (Halamska 2001).

This does not mean that party labels were visible during the 1994 election campaign. In small towns especially, candidates tried to avoid admitting any political orientation. The strategy most often adopted, following the popular disappointment with party politics, was that the "ideal" candidate did not belong to any party and did not represent anybody (except the community as a whole). Only such a candidate could be accepted by a considerable part of the electorate as "our man" (not belonging to "them" — in this case the political elite). It is a very telling

anecdote from one medium-sized city in which two candidates interviewed unwillingly admitted they were members of the political party but immediately stressed that this membership had absolutely nothing to do with their electoral programme and with what they planned to do as councillors (Swianiewicz 1994). Even in large cities, it was sometimes difficult to find a trace of parties' activity. Obviously, because of a proportional electoral system, candidates needed to organise in groups, but they tried to avoid any party labels and used local names instead. In most cases, a well-informed voter could easily recognise which party was hidden behind the name of which "local committee", but it was considered safer to do without a party name openly spelled-out. A very good example may be provided by the election campaign in Kraków, where major parties were using not very revealing names of committees such as: Your City, Self-Governing Kraków, Alliance for Kraków etc. (Swianiewicz 1994).

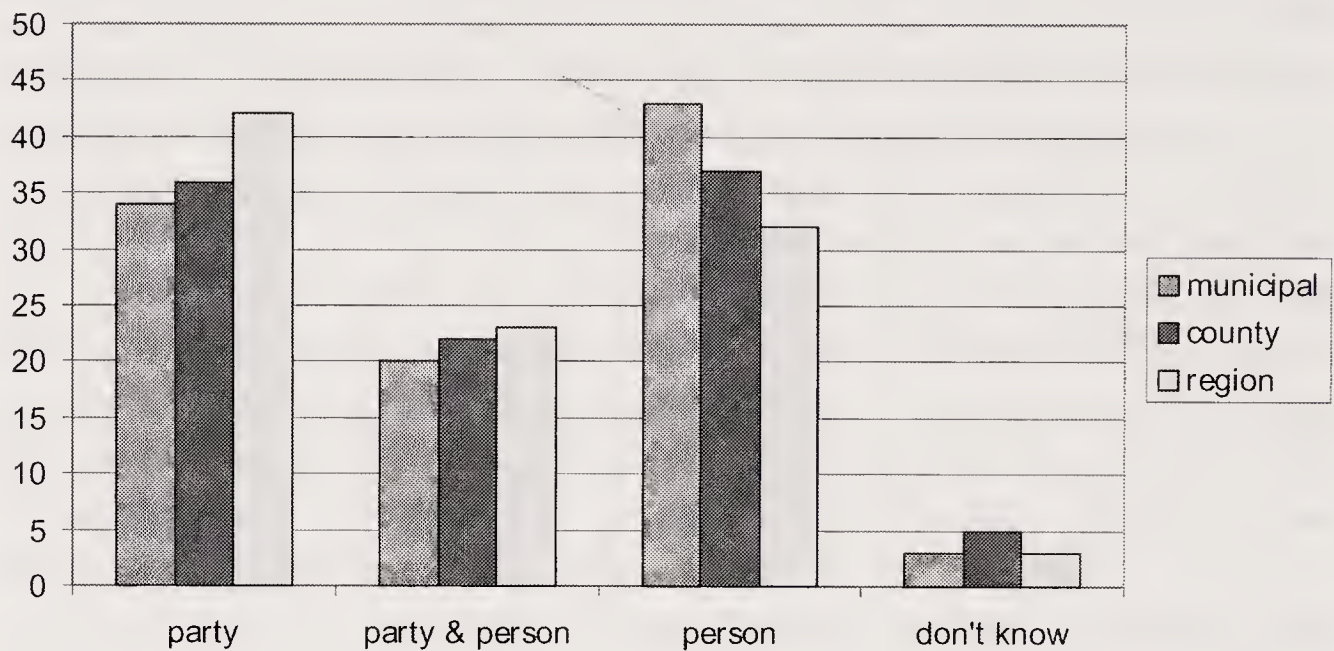
The 1998 local elections were definitely the most dominated by national political parties. This time they were using their own names, at least in big cities. Although we do not have any precise statistics, we know that the majority of seats in the councils were divided between SLD, coalition of rightist post-Solidarity parties called AWS, with an important role played sometimes by the centrist Union of Freedom — UW (in big cities) and PSL (in smaller municipalities). As in previous elections, in small municipalities an important role was played by independent (at least formally independent, i.e. not exposing their party affiliation during the election campaign) candidates, but in big cities the domination of major political parties was very clear. Halamska (2001) quotes data according to which in the whole country AWS won 14% of council seats, SLD 11%, PSL (in coalition with two other small parties) 6% and UW 1.5% (but the last party remained very important in major cities).

Nevertheless, according to a CBOS survey organised three months before the elections, a majority of voters still thought local governments should not be partisan. The survey included the question whether in local elections people should vote for national parties or local non-party candidates (committees). Only 10% chose parties, 48% non-party candidates (committees) while 32% answered "it depends". In spite of these verbal declarations, in the survey conducted shortly after 1998 elections, over one third of voters in municipal and almost half of voters in regional elections, admitted they primarily considered the party affiliation of the candidate while making the decision on voting (compare Figure 1, for more details see "Po wyborach...", 1998). Not surprisingly, the role of political parties was larger in big cities than in small towns or rural villages, however in the latter, the category of local governments was quite significant as well. In



rural governments 23%, in towns of up to 20,000 population 26% but in cities over 500,000 as many as 66% voters admitted they took into account partisan affiliation of candidates while making decisions on voting in municipal elections. Municipal elections remained less partisan than regional or central, but the majority of all voters considered the party colour of the candidate as an important criterion.

**Figure 1. In 1998 local election what was more important for your vote.**



The increasing acceptance for the role for parties in local politics may be illustrated by the fact that a few weeks after the 1998 election, as many as 32% of respondents said the strong presence of parties in local governments was good for local democracy, while only 21% had a positive opinion (the remaining 47% had either no opinion or thought it did not matter) (“Reakcje na wynik...” 1998).

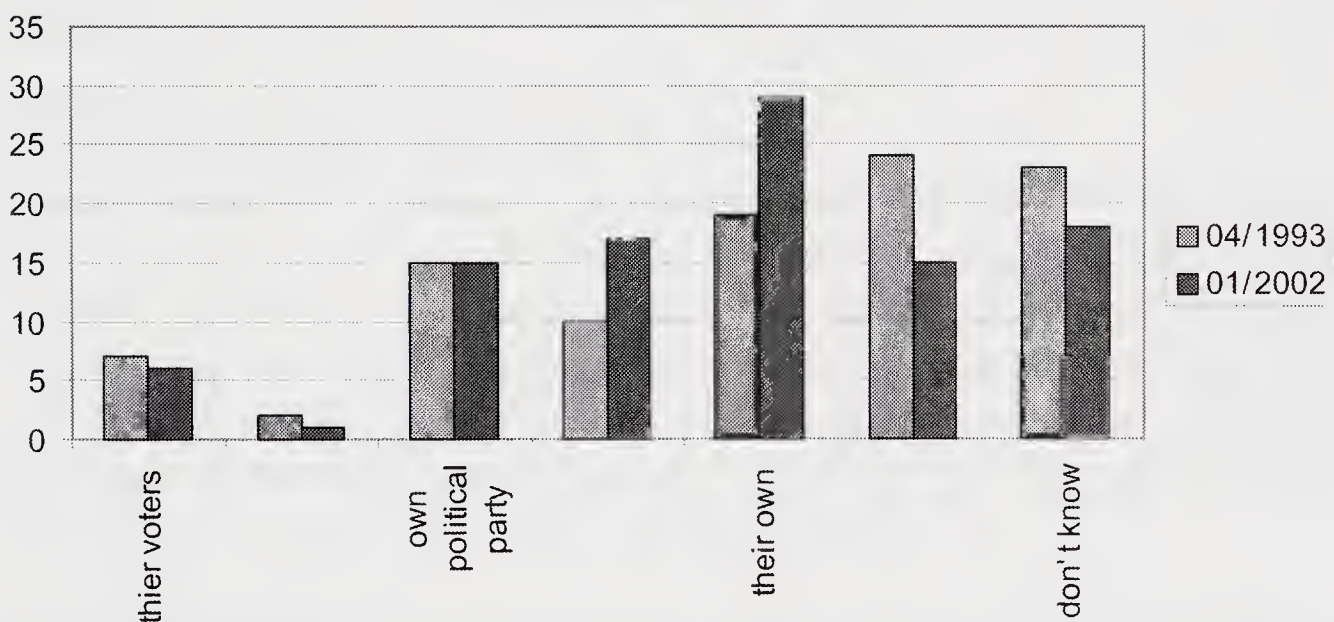
One may ask the question: why do people think parties should not be important in local governments but when it comes to real elections they vote for party candidates? There are three possible answers to this question. (1) People do not care much about local governments but local elections are used as an occasion for a “protest vote” in the middle of Parliamentary elections. In Poland local elections are usually about one year after the Parliamentary ones. This hypothesis does not seem correct, as several analysis suggest local government is recognised as an important political institution and enjoys a relatively high level of citizens’ trust (Swianiewicz 2001). (2) People do think that “the hole in the bridge is political” — there are no any data confirming this hypothesis, (3) The explanation may be found in the low level of membership in voluntary associations and in general in the low activity in local public life. So, when it comes to real

elections, parties are disliked by many voters, they are only recognised labels. This is especially true in big cities and in those municipalities in which elections are based on a proportional representation system.

Even more than before, in the discussions before the 2002 local elections, active participation of political parties in local government politics (especially in large cities) is taken for granted. Parties plan to use their own names in the election campaign, discuss possible coalitions, and even a very probable introduction of the direct, popular election of the executive mayor — opposite to some theoretical expectations — does not seem to stop the process of increasing importance of partisan choices.

What do people think about the increasing importance of parties in local politics? Polish citizens do not love political parties, but they do not think party interests dominate the local decision making process. In the recent (January 2002) CBOS survey only 15% of respondents (the same proportion as in 1993) said most of councillors represent first and foremost their party interests (see Figure 2). Most citizens are much more afraid of small, informal groups of interests. As many as 29% respondents (compared to 19% in 1993) said that most of councillors take into account first of all their own interests, while 17% (compared to 10% in 1993) were afraid that primary motivation of councillors is related to the interests of their friends, colleagues and relatives (“Moja miejscowość...” 2002).

**Figure 2. Whose interests are first of all represented by councillors in your municipality?**



## 2. Party Affiliation of Local Mayors

It is not surprising that the affiliation and party preferences of local mayors has been changing along with changes in the nature of local elections. In Poland the mayor plays a very important role, being both the political



representative of the municipality and the highest executive in the local administration. He (she) is elected indirectly — by the councillors — and the result of this election obviously reflects political constellation in the council.

In 1990 we witnessed an unprecedented turn-over in the position of mayors. Almost none of the former communist executives in cities over 40,000 and only about 15% in smaller local governments kept their position after the first democratic elections (Swianiewicz 1996a). Almost 60% of new mayors came from Solidarity Civic Committees, 10% from Peasants' Party and 20% declared they were independent (Baldersheim at al 1996). More than half of Polish mayors interviewed in 1991 declared they were not members of any political party (Bartkowski 1996). A large proportion had also no clear party preference. Over 30% asked in 1991 for whom they would vote in case of a Parliamentary election, answered they did not know! The Peasants Party had the largest support among mayors at (19%) and the Democratic Union at (17%)<sup>5</sup>.

In 1994 the turn-over among mayors, although still much higher than in stable Western democracies, has been much lower than in 1990 — slightly less than half of the mayors changed after the elections. According to a 1997 survey, a proportion of these with no clear party preference dropped significantly, but still 21% declared they did not know for whom they would vote in a parliamentary election. The party preferences of mayors are illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2. For whom would you vote in a Parliamentary election — mayors' answers (1991 N=242 and 1997 N=521)**

	1991 (%)	1997	
		<i>In the whole sample (%)</i>	<i>Municipalities over 20,000 population (%)</i>
AWS	NA	21	26
SLD (Social Democrats)	—	12	14
UD/ UW	17	17	23
PSL (Peasants' Party)	19	19	5
Other party	33	10	14
Do not know	31	21	18

Source: Local Democracy and Innovation project surveys

However in 1997, still 73% of mayors (and over 65% of mayors in municipalities over 20,000 population) declared they were not members of any political party.

In 1998 the turnover was higher again, and this time it was very much dependent on the size of local government. In municipalities over 10,000, most of mayors were replaced. In cities of over 40,000 the replacement

was the case in over two-thirds of incumbents and in cities over 300,000, all but one mayor was defeated. Changes in turn-over rates are summarised in Table 3. This phenomenon was clearly related to the increased role of political parties in the election. In larger cities — but to some extent also in smaller municipalities — the voting behaviour simply repeated choices made during national level elections. Consequently, even locally popular mayors were lucky to survive unless they were supported by one of the two largest parties. In cities with more than 100,000 citizens approximately half the mayors recruited from Social-Democrats (SLD) almost 40% from AWS and about 12% from Union of Freedom (UW).

**Table 3. Turnover of mayors after local elections**

	1990	1994	1998
Local governments below 20,000	84	42	48
Local governments with 20–40,000 population	84	48	59
Local governments over 40,000	100	45	66

Source: own calculations of the author on the basis of: LDI 1991 and 1997 surveys, survey conducted by FISE in 1995, the address-book of mayors prepared in 1997 and 1999 by Municipium.

The increasingly frequent partisan affiliation of local councillors and executive mayors in 1990s sounds like a natural development of the local politics in times of a new party system building. However it is interesting to notice that this phenomenon has not been observed in all Central-Eastern European countries (Swianiewicz 2001). In the Czech Republic independent councillors remain very important — they took 50% of seats in all councils in 1994 and 55% in 1998. In Slovakia there is a very clear difference between council and mayor elections (mayors are elected in the direct popular election in Slovakia). In councils political parties are very important — in 1990 as many as 16% of Slovak deputies were independent, while in 1998 this proportion dropped to 9%. But this phenomenon was not followed by the direct elections of mayors — the proportion of non-party mayors increased from 26% in 1990 to 29% in 1998. However it does not look as if the introduction of direct mayors' elections in Poland might stop the increase of political parties' importance as well.

### **3. Importance of Party Politics as Perceived by Local Mayors**

What do mayors think about importance of parties in local politics? Some light is thrown by the results of 1991 and 1997 surveys conducted within the LDI project. The most important findings are summarised in Table 4.



These findings can be summarised in a few items:

- the role of parties is very low. In 1991 the influence of political parties on local decision making was assessed as the lowest among 18 actors which were considered. In 1997 using the same mayors' reputation method parties scored as last but one. In both surveys being a member of political parties was assessed as the least important among 14 different qualifications of the councillor. Interestingly enough, not being a member of the party was considered as valuable more often than the membership. This observation stresses the negative attitude towards party politics.
- although very slowly, but the role of parties seems to increase.
- parties are more important in bigger local governments, but almost totally invisible in small communities. Numerous mayors, especially in small communities, refused to assess the role of the party in their municipalities, stating the question was irrelevant (usually because there were not any active political parties there).

**Table 4. Mayors' opinions on the role of parties in the local politics**

		1991 (N=247)	1997 (N=521)	
			All local governments	Over 20,000 population
Political parties influence local decision making	No + little influence	88.7%	81.2%	69%
	Big + very big influence	2.5%	3.1%	8%
Being a party member is an important qualification for local councillor	No + little importance	78.1%	88.0%	80%
	Big + very big importance	7.0%	2.1%	6%
Not being a party member is an important qualification for local councillor	No + little importance	NA	69.5%	75%
	Big + very big importance	NA	11.2%	7%
Contacts with leaders of own political party are important for the mayor	No + little importance	NA	27.1%	21.2%
	Big + very big importance	NA	15.2%	30.3%
	Don't know/not relevant	NA	44.2%	37.4%
In difficult decisions I consider own party opinion	Never + almost never	NA	27.0%	18.0%
	Often + very often	NA	14.6%	25.0%
	Don't know/not relevant	NA	31.3%	15.0%
Party is an important source of information for the mayor	No + little importance	NA	20.6%	13.8%
	Big + very big importance	NA	29.5%	26.8%
	Don't know/not relevant	NA	37.0%	26.7%

Source: Local Democracy and Innovation Project surveys.

#### 4. Do Politics Matter for Local Policy Choices?

Is political orientation of local leaders and councillors important for decisions they make on local issues? We can try to investigate this question in two ways:

- asking about their opinions/preferences
- analysing policy outputs in municipalities governed by different political parties.

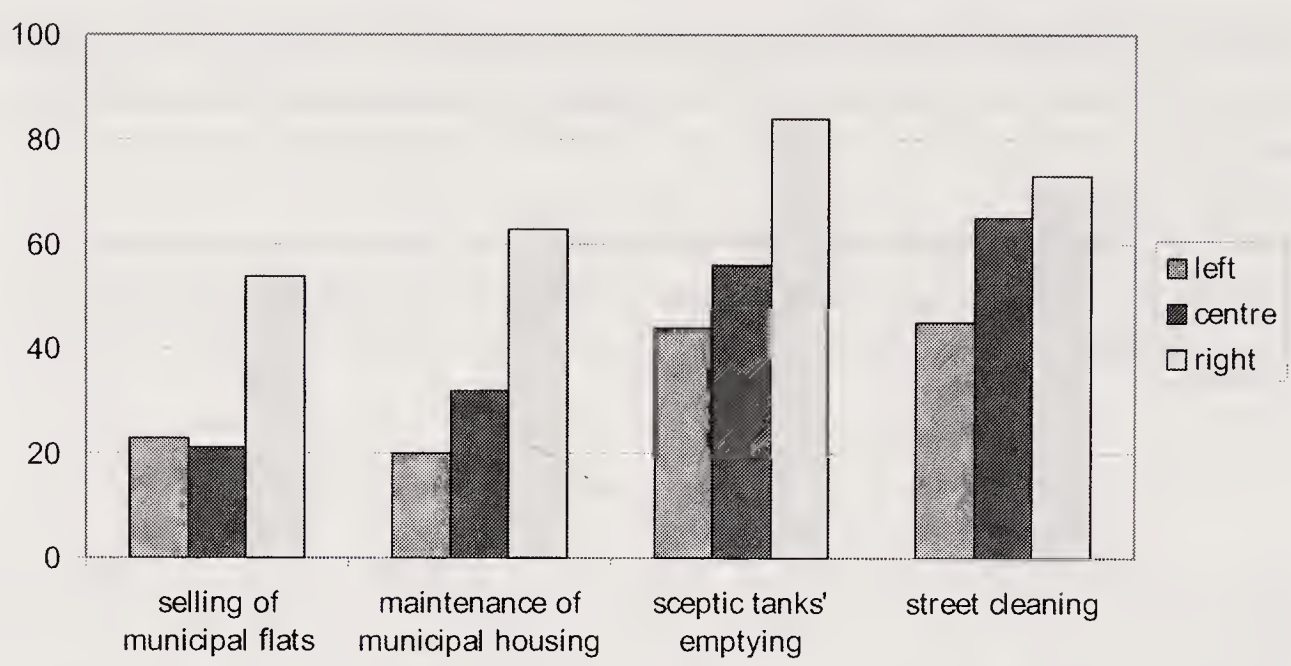
##### *4.1. Political colour and the variation of policy preferences*

Some differences in political cultures between mayors supporting various newly-emerging parties were described already on 1991 data (compare Swianiewicz, Clark 1996). In 1994 the survey of almost 200 candidates in local elections in 12 Polish cities led to surprisingly consistent findings on the variation of respondents' preferences (Swianiewicz 1996a). As it was mentioned above, the terms "left" and "right" as well as party names were usually avoided in the election campaign and this might be related to the more general phenomenon of distrust towards political elites. But at the same time, as many as 86% of the candidates surveyed were able to locate themselves on the subjective left-right scale. Also, in spite of quite frequent opinions that the traditional distinction between left and right wing politics lost its relevance in the Central and Eastern Europe (see for example Jasiewicz 1992), this self-location was also significantly correlated with the candidates' policy preferences (see Figures 3–5). "Left" candidates were much more pro-spending than "right" ones. The difference was most visible in the case of local functions classified by Peterson (1981) as redistributive or allocative. For example an increase in spending on welfare services was popular among "leftist" candidates more than twice as often as among "rightist". In the case of development functions the difference was non-significant. "Leftist" candidates were also much less willing to privatise municipal property and more often thought that local governments should provide direct financial support (grants) for local businesses.

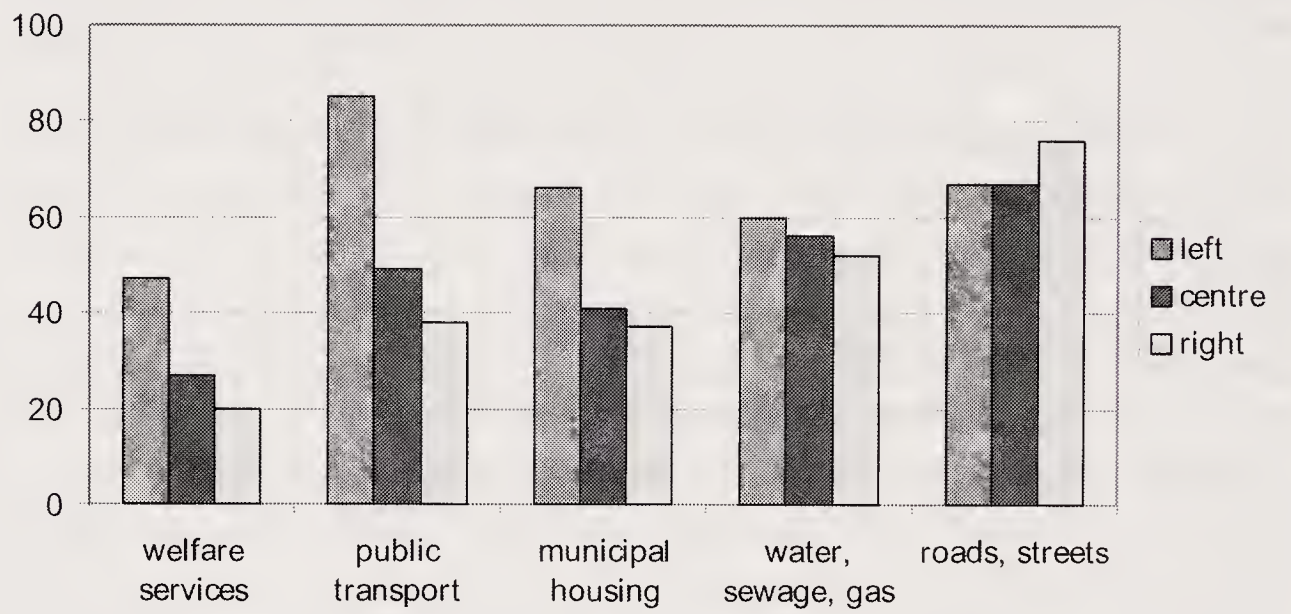
Empirical evidence collected through the survey suggests that party affiliation also made a difference to local policies. This is briefly illustrated by Figures 6–7<sup>6</sup> presenting candidates' opinions on selling municipal housing, the privatisation of local services and budget spending preferences. On the basis of 1994 candidates survey one might classify local party politicians into four following groups:



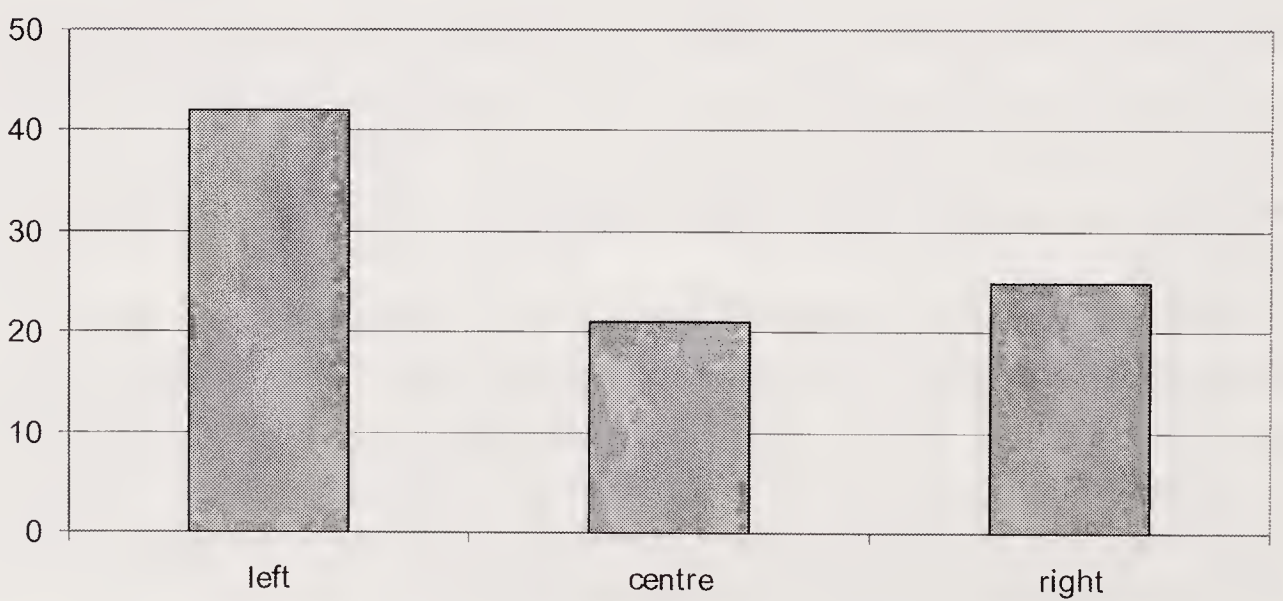
**Figure 3. % of candidates supporting privatisation (1994).**



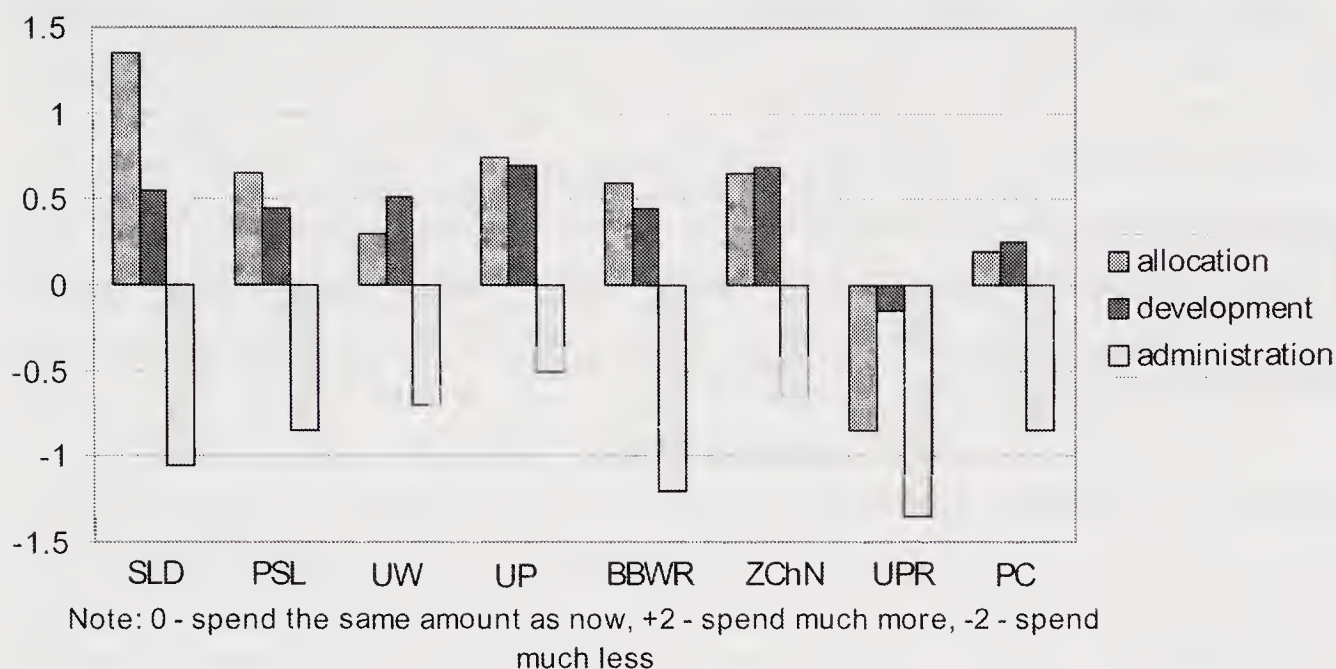
**Figure 4. % of candidates preferring increase of spending on (1994).**



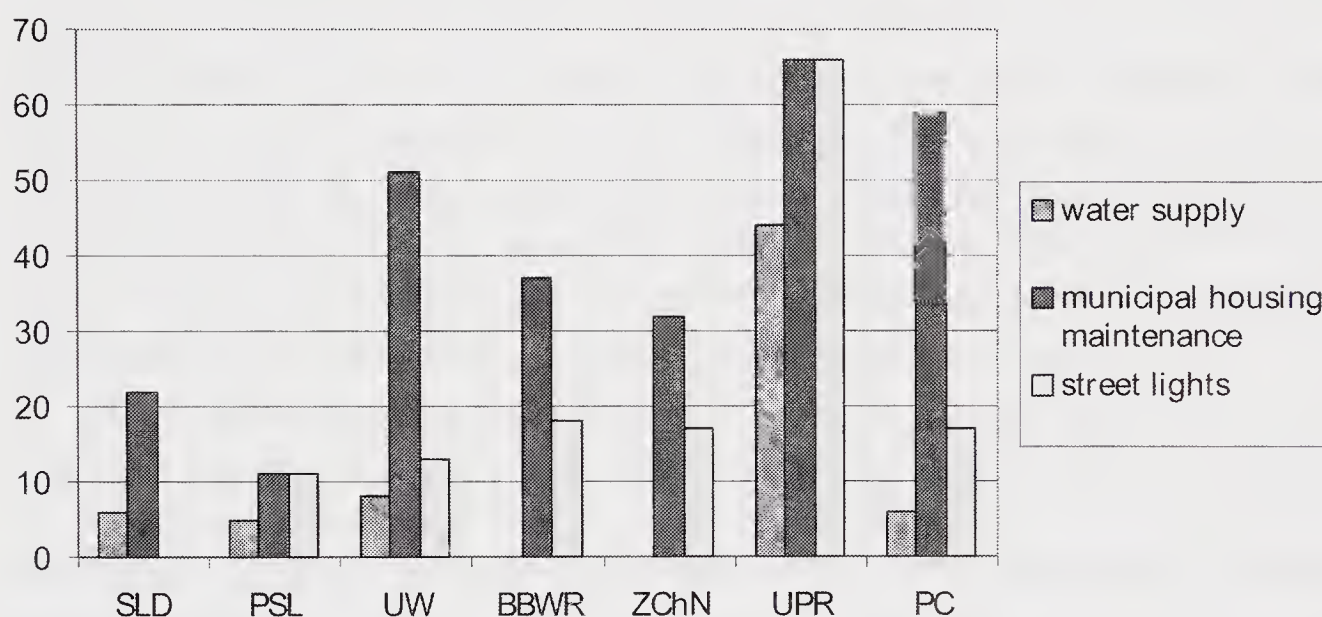
**Figure 5. % of candidates who thought local governments should directly support local businesses (1994).**



**Figure 6. Spending preference of candidates in 1994 elections.**



**Figure 7. Willingness to privatise local services (candidates in 1994 local elections).**



Group I (SLD, PSL, BBWR) might be described as those with a typical leftist (social-democrat or socialist) orientation. They were characterised by an unwillingness to sell municipal property, an ambivalent attitude towards privatisation of services, high spending preferences (especially on welfare services, health, housing, education). In local economic policies parties belonging to this group, placed special attention on supporting existing firms rather than on attracting new investment.

Group II (UP) was on many issues similar to group I and might also be classified as “socialist”. But this group was significantly distinct from group I in two respects: (1) UP had a much more positive attitude towards privatisation, (2) UP was more ready to increase local taxes. One might



risk an opinion that the policy preferences of UP supporters were more coherent than those supporting parties of the group I because they not only suggested expansion of local public spending but also indicated where they wanted to take money from.

Group III (UW, ZChN, PC) might be treated as a centrist one. Opinions on most policy issues were quite close to the average for the whole sample. The only "non-average" characteristics were: quite high support for privatisation and a strong emphasis on the attraction of new investments via local economic policies.

Group IV (UPR) was consistently conservative on economic issues. A typical UPR supporter would like to sell almost all municipal properties, privatise services, reduce local taxes and local spending (excluding that on police and security). In local economic policies the stresses were on the responsibility of local government for making the environment friendly for businesses and investors.

It is necessary to make a few comments on this typology. First of all it is an historical one, based on 1994 data. Some of these parties do not exist any more or lost their significance. But it is important to stress that differences between local party supporters were in the 1994 local election campaign surprisingly clear and consistent. Second, the typology of parties presented above might certainly be surprising for many observers of the Polish political scene and even offensive for others. Was BBWR, a movement created by Wałęsa, similar in its economic preferences to the leftist (post-communist) governing coalition? Were ZChN and PC really close to UW, despite the official hostility between those parties' elites? It would seem yes, if we take into account economic issues and the opinions of local (not central) political leaders. Certainly the picture would be different if we take into account also opinions on social issues like abortion, the role of religion in public life or attitudes towards former communist activists in public life.

The left-right dimension was also visible in spending preferences expressed by mayors in the 1997 survey of Local Democracy and Innovation Research Project.

#### *4.2. Political colour and the variation of policy outputs*

To what extent these differences in verbally expressed policy preferences are being really translated into differences in policy outputs of local governments? Such a relationship between party colour and implemented policies has been identified in some countries, including United Kingdom (for example Sharpe, Newton 1984; Page, Goldsmith, Kousgaard 1990)

while not confirmed in some other European countries (see for example Clarke 1989). A full answer to this question would certainly require a separate study, but some speculations (or hypotheses) are possible on the basis of currently available data.

First of all, we should notice that in the Polish local government system there is a potential space for such a diversification of local policies. This claim can be illustrated by several simple examples: (i) municipalities differ in their attitude to the provision of local services, (ii) within limits defined by the Parliament they can set rates of local taxes, (iii) they can also differ in policies related to the promotion of economic growth.

The initial test of the hypothesis on the influence of political affiliation of local political leaders on policy outputs of local governments has been conducted on local tax policies. Is it so, that municipalities run by mayors supporting some political parties tend to have lower rates of local taxes, while those run by mayors of a different political affiliation have higher local tax rates more often?

This hypothesis has been verified in a simple model in which dependent variables were the rates of the most important local taxes in 1995, 1997 and 2000 (expressed as percentage of maximum rates allowed by central regulations), while independent variables were: (i) a mayor's political affiliation with one of following parties/political groups: SLD, PSL, UW, AWS (in 1995 the AWS did not exist and affiliation with one of right-wing parties such as PC, ZChN has been taken into account), (ii) self-location of the mayor on left-right political scale.

The total sample size for 1995 and 1997 was 347 and for 2000 — 145 mayors. The test of statistical significance has been based on variation analysis methods such as one way and ANOVA methods. Having in mind a relatively clear picture of the variation in policy preferences described in the section 4.1, the results of the test based on actual tax policies may look disappointing.

In 1995/1997 the self-location on left-right wing scale proved to be insignificant for decisions on local taxes. The only party which differed significantly (0.05 significance) in the local property tax rates was PSL (Peasants' Party). Local governments in municipalities led by mayors supporting PSL had usually lower rates of property tax than municipalities run by mayors with different political affiliations. Available data do not allow for a more detail explanation of this relationship, however other analysis indirectly suggest (see Swianiewicz 1996b) that predominantly rural local governments with the strong influence of PSL have often low tax rates for residential homes of farmers, while rates of taxes for properties used for business activities do not differ significantly from those



adopted in other municipalities. The relationship between political affiliations of mayors and rates of another important local tax — tax on vehicles — was insignificant.

The relationship found data for 2000 was even weaker. Although, rates of property tax in municipalities governed by PSL mayors, were lower than in those run by AWS, SLD or UW mayors, the relationship disappeared when controlled by the population size of local government. It means rates are lower in “PSL-municipalities” not before they are controlled by PSL, but because they are usually much smaller than those dominated by remaining parties. The population size factor seemed to be the strongest single factor explaining variation of local tax rates.

Summing up, our test failed to confirm party influence on local policy outputs measured by local tax rates. However, the strong conclusion on the lack of relationship between political colour and implemented policies should still be treated as initial hypothesis only and needs to be weakened by the following observations:

- the size of our sample (especially in 2000) was relatively small,
- we took into account only the political colour of the mayor, who is a leader of the executive board, but he (she) does not make all decisions alone and is strongly dependent on the local council (decisions on local tax rates are formally made by the council). Obviously, the mayor usually represents the party which is the strongest in the council, but perhaps deeper analysis of policy outputs should take into account the political composition of the executive board (single party or coalition) and size of the majority in the local council,
- in our test we concentrated on general data related tax policies only leaving aside other important areas of local policies.

## **5. Clientelism in the Local Government Financial System?**

One of the questions which is sometimes asked about the practical implementation of the grant system is to what extent imprecise allocation formulae allow for support of political allies of the parties governing on the central level (see for example M.W.S. Chandler 2001). Theoretically it is also possible that the detail allocation formula (which does not allow for subjective decisions) is structured in such a way that it works in favour of a concrete political group.

To what extent may this be the case of Polish local governments? It seems unlikely but to answer this question with a higher degree of certainty we will try to undertake a more careful analysis including statistical tests of

empirical data. First of all, it is unlikely to happen in the case of a general purpose grant which is based on clear and easily measurable criteria. Moreover, it has been stable enough for last several years to make political bias of the formula unlikely. But one may expect such decisions dictated by the partisan solidarity may happen in allocation of some special purpose grants. It seems that grants for capital investments might be potentially the most vulnerable to such deformation. We have tried to check this hypothesis in several ways, using 2000 data on actual allocation.

First of all, it has been checked whether the central decisions (made in the parliament and government) are structured in such a way that they support regions governed by the same parties which are ruling on the central level. If this hypothesis is confirmed, one might expect larger per capita investment grants to regional self-governments in regions governed by central government coalition parties. Moreover, one might expect that average per capita investment grants to municipal governments would be larger in the same regions, since the majority of local governments are dominated by the same parties. 2000 data suggest that both hypothesis (concerning grants to regional and to municipal self-governments) are not confirmed. There is no statistically significant relationship between the colour of the regional party and the amount of capital grants. More surprisingly there is also a lack of significant correlation between per capita investment grants and regional variation of the GDP. It means, investment grants are not used as a tool of the regional equalising policy! But this finding would require further development in a separate study.

But even if the central decisions on grants are not politically biased, one may expect it may more likely happen on the regional level, where the governor (nominated by the Prime Minister) allocates support for individual municipalities' investments. The full verification of such hypothesis would require very time- and effort-consuming detailed studies not possible in this paper. However, we are able to provide at least partial verification for the sample of 112 medium-sizes and small towns for which we have data on the political colour of the local mayor.

**Table 5. Per capita investment grants to regional and municipal governments depending on governing/opposition status of the party ruling on a regional level (2000)**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Per capita investment grants</i>	
	<i>to regional tier</i>	<i>to municipal tier</i>
Average — government	18.98	18.73
Average — opposition	22.29	19.85

Source: own calculations on the basis of Ministry of Finance data



**Table 6. Per capita investment grants to municipal governments depending on governing/opposition status of the local mayor (2000, sample of 112 towns)**

<i>Towns governed by mayors belonging to:</i>	<i>Per capita investment grant</i>
– governing coalition party	11.29
– opposition party	8.25

Source: own calculations on the basis of Ministry of Finance data and “*Wspolnota*” survey on political orientation of local mayors.

The data in Table 6 seemed to suggest there is a political dependence of the investment grant allocation. But statistical tests proved the relationship is not significant. Nevertheless one may still expect that such a relationship is more likely within individual regions, where one regional governor is making decisions concerning several local government investments. Again, to verify such a claim we would require additional investigation. But for the time being we have been able to test such hypothesis for three regions (which were the best represented in our sample of 112 towns) and in one group of regions (four regions in Eastern Poland). Only one of these four tests resulted in the correlation, which was on the margin of statistical significance (0.055 significance level). This happened in the region in which the majority of local governments were dominated by the opposition. Possibly in such circumstances government officials (governor in that case) are more willing to support their political colleagues but the small size of the sample does not allow to treat this finding as anything more than just a hypothesis.

Summing up, according to available data, the thesis on the relatively high immunity of the Polish grants system for politically influenced decisions cannot be rejected.

**Summary of Findings**

In spite of a very weak membership base of political parties in Poland, they become increasingly important in local government politics. In each of the next local elections, the parties were more and more visible. The 1990 local elections might be characterised as non-partisan, 1994 as “hidden partisan” (parties were active but tried not be very visible) and 1998 as well as planned for 2002, “openly partisan”. Certainly there is a difference between elections in small rural governments, which are quite often non-partisan, and the situation in big cities where elections are clearly dominated by national parties, but an increasingly partisan character could be observed in all categories of local governments.

This process has been noticed by voters without enthusiasm but with acceptance. Most voters admit they take into account their preferences for national parties while making voting decisions in local elections. Only a minority of citizens see the influence of political parties as a danger for the development of local democracy. Also, a relatively small proportion of respondents is afraid that local councillors pursue their party interests in council resolutions, most people are more afraid of pursuing the private interests of informal groups of colleagues.

Not surprisingly being a party member is not seen by mayors as an important qualification for a good councillor or mayor. Quite the opposite, it happens that “not being a party member” is considered a positive characteristic. But quite surprisingly mayors claim party politics are not important in local decision making. It seems to be in contradiction to an observation of fast increasing role of parties in election campaigns and local elections. The partial explanation of this introduction might be that the last available mayors’ survey data is from 1997, i.e. before the clearly partisan 1998 local elections. Another potential explanation is related to the weakness of major national parties local branches. Parties are capable of mobilising for the election campaign, but between elections they are not active and informal groups of friends, colleagues etc. may play a more important role.

There are relatively clear differences between the policy preferences of councillors and mayors supporting various political parties as well between those who self-locate themselves on the left and right wing of the political spectrum. But we could not find any evidence that these variations in verbally expressed preferences translate in real policy outputs. The test conducted on rates of local taxes has shown that contextual factors such as — firstly — the size of local government are much more powerful explanatory variables, while the political colour of the mayor is almost totally insignificant.

Last but not least, one might expect that the role of party politics in local government functioning may be manifested through specific grants allocated by central government. One might suspect that the government tends to favour regional and municipal governments run by their local political allies. However, the test on 2000 data does not confirm such hypothesis. The grant allocation system seems to be immune for political clientelism.

Most of conclusions formulated above are based on simple tests based on limited data. There is no doubt that they require a more comprehensive investigation before they are finally confirmed or rejected. The issue of the



role of parties in the local government operation is certainly an important research topic worthy of further analysis.

## Notes

- 1 The author is a professor in the European Institute for Regional and Local Development, University of Warsaw.
- 2 CBOS — Centre of Public Opinion Surveys (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej).
- 3 Local Democracy and Innovation — international research project involving the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, funded by the Norwegian government and directed by Prof. Harald Baldersheim (University of Bergen). First survey of LDI has been analysed and presented in : H. Baldersheim, M. Illner, A. Offerdal, L. Rose, P. Swianiewicz, 1996.
- 4 Compare: Swianiewicz 1996a.
- 5 The data quoted originate from two surveys conducted (in 1991 and 1997) by Local Democracy and Innovation Research Project. The LDIR project covered Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, was sponsored by the Norwegian government and managed by Prof. Harald Baldersheim from the University of Oslo.
- 6 The distinction between allocation and development policies (Figure 4) follows one used by Balme (1992), which in turn was a modification of the classic Peterson's classification in the "city limits" theory. Education, social welfare, health, leisure and public housing have been classified as allocation, while streets, mass transportation, police/public order and public utilities have been classified as development functions. The parties (some of them no longer exist) described in Figures 4–6: SLD — the post-communist social-democrats, PSL — peasants' party, after 1990 twice in the governing coalition with SLD, UD — Democratic Union, in 1995 transformed into Union of Freedom, one of the major parties emerged from the Solidarity movement, usually identified with political and economic reform initiated at the end of 1989, BBWR — a movement created by Wałęsa before 1993 parliamentary election, UPR — radical conservative country, *laissez-faire* on economic issues, PC — Central Alliance — in the middle of 1990s one of the major rightist parties emerged from the Solidarity movement, UP — Union of Labour, post-Solidarity leftist party, currently in coalition with SLD, ZChN — Christian Nationalist Union, conservative on social issue, unclear on economic issues.

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# The Regional Elites

## The Polish Experiences in a Comparative Perspective

Antoni Kukliński and Karol Olejniczak

### Introduction

The path breaking study of D.C. Christopoulos<sup>1</sup> is an inducement to review the problematique of Regional Elites in Poland and to outline a research project in this field if possible in a network of comprehensive studies covering the experiences of 50 regions in Europe. In this context we see the following thematic sequence of this discussion paper:

- I. The Elites — Pareto revisited.
- II. The Elites — a rudimentary typology.
- III. The European Scene.
- IV. The Polish Scene.
- V. The Regional Elites in Poland — the historical perspectives.
- VI. The Regional Elites in Poland — general studies.
- VII. The Regional Elites in Poland — monographic studies.
- VIII. The Regional Elites and the future of Europe.

### I. The Elites — Pareto revisited

The reflection on the elites is a very vivid stream in the history of social sciences. One of the most interesting and at the same time most controversial contributions in this field is the theory of elites developed by Vilfredo Pareto<sup>2</sup> in his "Trattato di sociologia generale" published in 1916.

In the Polish social sciences we find a comprehensive evaluation of the power and misery of this theory. The contributions of A.Hertz<sup>3</sup>, Z. Bauman<sup>4</sup> and Cz. Znamierowski<sup>5</sup> should be quoted in this context. I am convinced, that a review of the Pareto controversy could be an interesting element of our studies in the future.<sup>6</sup>



## II. The Elites — a Rudimentary Typology

In this rudimentary typology we would like to introduce two dimensions. The first dimension is the source of the elite — in other words — the whole system of phenomena and factors, which create the conditions for the emergence of a particular type of elite in a given place. In this dimension we propose to distinguish six types of elite:

1. the elite of blood — aristocracy,
2. the elite of money — plutocracy,
3. the elite of power,<sup>7</sup>
4. the elite of science,
5. the elite of education,
6. the elite of culture.

It is convenient intellectually to see these six types as quasi separate phenomena — but in real life situations we observe a strong tendency of different mergers leading from a particular elite to the notion of the elite *in toto*. The power of elites is changing not only in time but also in space. In different stages of historical development we see a stronger or weaker clash of old or new elites or a circulation of elites following the terminology of V Pareto. The spatial dimension can be expressed in the following classification:

- a. the global elite,
- b. the continental elite,
- c. the national elite,
- d. the regional elite,
- e. the local elite.

Also in the spatial dimension the merger of elites is an important phenomenon. The merger of national, regional and local elites is a characteristic feature of the French Scene. The integration of substantive and spatial dimension is leading to a typology presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Elites of the XIX and XX centuries (A rudimentary typology)

The sources	Spatial dimension				
	global	continental	national	regional	local
Blood					
Money					
Power					
Science					
Education					
Culture					

This typology is inducing us to see the regional elite in the broad and changing context of substance time and space.<sup>8</sup> In this framework we can formulate three fundamental questions concerning regional elites:

1. The power and composition of the regional elite — expressed *inter alia* in the scale of the domain, which is the object of autonomous or at least quasi autonomous decisions of this elite.
2. The identity of these regional elites<sup>9</sup> as a factor derived from the identity of the regions and as a factor building up the identity of the region.
3. The performance of the regional elite as a positive factor in the development of the given region.

We can imagine a situation, where a strong regional elite having a strong identity — is a long term disaster in the history of the region. Therefore — the positive role of the Regional Elite in the improvement of the regional performance should be proven in each case.

### III. The European Scene

N. Davies<sup>10</sup> has used the term “dynamo-powerhouse of the world” describing the most magnificent chapter in the history of Europe 1815–1914.

This chapter has produced probably the most elegant elite in universal history — being a unique blend of blood, money, power, education and culture. In the regional elite of this chapter the aristocracy and nobility has performed an important role — more or less pronounced in different parts of Europe.

It is a tragic paradox of history, that this unique European elite has committed a mega historical suicide — starting with World War I in 1914 opening the next — this time a dark chapter in European history, called by N. Davies<sup>11</sup> “Tenebrae — Europe in Eclipse — 1914–1945”.

The twentieth century has transformed Europe in a deep and multidimensional way. This process of transformation has created a new European Elite, which in the year 2000 has quite different features in relation to the elite of the year 1900. Five factors were responsible for the transformation of the European Elite in the twentieth century:

1. World War I and II
2. The Bolshevik Revolution
3. The Welfare State
4. The creation and development of the European Union<sup>12</sup>
5. The second wave of globalisation<sup>13</sup> started around 1970 (the first wave of globalisation took place in the years 1870–1914).



The European elite of the year 2000 is definitely more democratic and less elegant in comparison with the elite of the year 1900. However, this more democratic and less elegant elite — is *grosso modo* performing well — as a creator of a prosperous and unified Europe of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In this new stage of European development — the role of regions and regional elites is very important.

The already quoted contribution of D.C. Christopoulos<sup>14</sup> is opening a new chapter in theoretical and empirical studies in this field.

These studies should use also three important inspirations — the reflection on “regional democracy”,<sup>15</sup> the reflection on “innovation prone and innovation averse societies”<sup>16</sup> and the reflection of the mesoproject.<sup>17</sup>

The regional elite must be developed in the framework of regional democracy. The regional elite must be an element of Innovation Prone Society.

#### IV. The Polish Scene

The glory and misery of the history of Poland can to a large extent be explained by the glory and misery of the Polish elite. An ample documentation of this thesis can be found in the glorious experiences of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and in the disaster of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The twentieth century was an age of very deep transformations of the Polish elite. Four phases of this transformation should be mentioned:

1. The phase of the Second Republic (1918–1939), which has magnificent contributions in the development of the Polish elite. We are not saying, that the whole experience of the Second Republic was magnificent — it was very miserable in some fields. But in the promotion of the development of the elite — *inter alia* via an excellent system of education the Second Republic was really efficient.
2. The destruction of the Polish elite by the huge totalitarian machineries of Hitler and Stalin. The scale of this destruction has created irreplaceable damage in the structure of Polish society and has interrupted the continuity in the history of this society.
3. The experiences of real socialism in Poland as a vehicle of elimination of the “old elite” and of the creation of a new elite. The evaluation of this process and the value judgments expressed in this context are deeply differentiated following the personal experiences of any given member of Polish society in the years 1945–1990.

4. The development of the Polish elite after 1990 in the framework of Third Republic. Unfortunately the processes of the development of the New Elite of Polonia Restituta are very slow and inefficient.

It is very difficult to find an objective and comprehensive analysis and evaluation of this process. Some elements of well balanced thinking in this field are presented in the contribution of T. Zarycki.<sup>18</sup> A brainstorming and controversial approach is developed by J. Staniszkis<sup>19</sup> indicating the pathologic elements in the development of the Polish elites after 1990. Let us mention only the provocative question formulated by J. Staniszkis:<sup>20</sup>

“Post-communist weak state — is it also post-democratic?”

## V. The Regional Elites in Poland — the Historical Perspective

The regional dimension and the regional elite are deeply incorporated in the millennium of Polish history. This was a blessing — in this sense — that different forms of regional autonomy have contributed to the multidimensional development of Polish society and culture. This was a disaster, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries — since the pathologies of regional autonomy promoted by the grand aristocratic families — have destroyed the unity and integrity of the Polish — Lithuanian Commonwealth — leading to the elimination of our country from the map of Europe.

Following earlier contributions<sup>21</sup> we reproduced in this paper five maps documenting the changes in the territorial organisation of the country from 1569 to 1999 (Appendix 2).

In the analysis of the contributions of the development of the regional elite — the power, composition and scale of the meso-level<sup>22</sup> is an important institutional factor.

*Ceteris paribus* — bigger and stronger regions are a better institutional environment for the development of a regional elite than the smaller and weaker regions. This is confirmed by the Polish experiences indicating for example, that the division of Poland into 49 small provinces (1975–1998) has not created favourable conditions for the development of valid regional elites.

The great reform of the territorial organisation of the country<sup>23</sup> implemented in 1998 has opened a new chapter in the history of the formation of regional elites in Poland. Two elements of this reform should be mentioned in this context:



- i. the changed scale of the region — the smaller 49 voivodships (provinces) were replaced by much bigger 16 voivodships (provinces). The bigger unit has a much better equipment to build up a regional identity, related *inter alia* to the historical background,
- ii. the new 16 territorial unities were recognised not only as a subdivision of the administrative power of the central government but also as a unit of regional self government with a regional Sejmik (small parliament) elected directly by the population of the province.

The grand reform of 1998 has changed the Polish regions into valid partners of the regional dialogue inside the present and enlarged European Union.

## VI. The Regional Elites — General Studies

In Appendix 3 you will find background information, which may be useful in the general reflection related to potential emerging in the 16 governmental and self-governmental regions.

We will not try in this place to present a comprehensive review of the situation of the regional elites in 16 regions. This should be the aim of the whole study programme. Let us present only some observations and examples:

1. *the first approximation in the definition of Polish Political Elites* — are four groups of people — involved in the political process:
  - a. the members of national parliament elected in the region,
  - b. the members of the regional Sejmik,
  - c. the leaders and most eminent members of the political parties, that are responsible for the regional unit of the party in the given region,
  - d. the eminent representatives of local government,
2. *the first approximation in the definition of Business Elite* — are two groups of people:
  - a. the eminent Polish and foreign entrepreneurs, who are directly involved in economic activities located in the given regions,
  - b. the leaders of business associations and business self governmental, who are active in the given region,
3. *the first approximation in the definition of the Academic Elite* — are three groups of people:
  - a. the rectors and vice rectors of the institutions of higher education,
  - b. the eminent members of the R and D domain — contributing directly to the development of the knowledge-based economy of the given region,

- c. the eminent members of the academic community, who are directly involved in the intellectual process of building up the identity and the economic social and cultural performance of the given region.

At this stage of our thinking, we will restrict our attention to three Regional Elites:

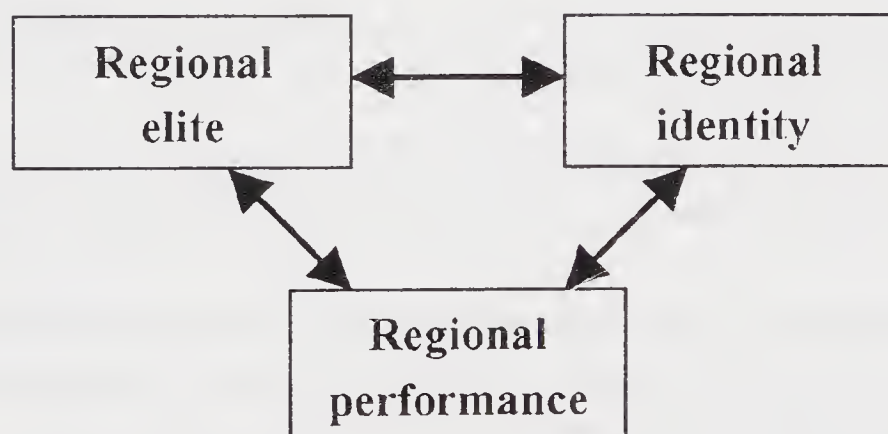
1. the political elite
2. the business elite
3. the academic elite.

Appendix 4 gives a report of a Conference organised in November 2001 by the Rector of the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań. The 25 participants of this Conference can be recognised as a good sample of the regional elite of Wielkopolska.

### The Regional Elites in Poland — the Project of Monographic Studies

In the monographic studies we applied the methods of D.C. Christopoulos — naturally with the necessary adaptation. Based on the Christopoulos question we raised the following working hypothesis: **High quality regional elite is emerging only in regions with strong regional identity.** Of course, this intuitive assumption does not have to be proven right in the research. However, our overall aim is to examine if the existence of a strong regional identity always supports the quality of the regional elite.

The concept of “regional elite quality” is crucial in the research. It links the regional identity with the regional performance. As a result, we detect the following research triangle:



Of course, it would be a dangerous simplification to accept the quality of a regional elite as the main cause of regional growth. The development processes depend on several variables, many of them exogenous. Identity



and elite cannot alone explain all the differences in regional growth. Our assumption is rather of a regional elite as one of the main endogenous elements that *facilitates* regional performance. To put it simply: we want to know if strong identity gives comparative advantage for the region. Our assumption is that the higher the identity, the higher the quality of the regional elite and the better facilitation of the growth process.

Clearly, the research triangle presented gives the possibility for several working hypothesis. However, for our proposition we concentrate only on one, stated above, direction of causation.

## Defining the Variables

Three elements require precise definition.

First, definition of the regional identity is needed. This should be made for the purposes of the Polish project, in the context of Polish regions. We are convinced that the definition should include such elements as awareness of own regional distinctiveness, history, linkage with the area, degree of identity (identification against other regions).

The second requirement is the definition of the target group — the regional elite. In the Polish project we would like to follow the definitions made in Title 6 of the following paper. Thus we are planning to analyse the regional elite as an interaction of three elites — the political elite — the business elite and the academic elite. The analysis of the political and business elite is going to follow the pattern established by D.C. Christopoulos. The academic elite is an innovation following the Polish experiences in which:

- the academic regional elite is an important factor in the creation and development of regional identity,
- the academic elite very often creates an important platform of interaction between the political and business elite.

We could also consider the inclusion of the fourth elite — the cultural elite — since it can play the special function of the confidant of the regional identity.

As Christopoulos pointed out in his note<sup>24</sup> the precise definition of elite is required. We should carefully consider how are we going to identify the members of the elite, according to what criteria, etc.

Last, but not least, is the definition of the “quality” of the regional elite — the central element of the project. The “quality” of the elite is not only its “strength”. The strength itself is not always in positive relation to the performance of the region. There are situations when well-established

identity is background for strong regional elite but of hermetic, conservative and preservative behaviours. This kind of elite blocks any innovative actions and pushes into margins any entrepreneurial behaviour in a region. As a result, it demobilises regional potential and hampers regional competitiveness and growth.

Therefore, in our project we propose to evaluate the level of quality of the elite on the basis of how the elite face the challenges of the global world. The elite of high quality is the one whose characteristic enables it to be dynamic and innovative. We discuss this issue in another part of the text.

## Research Steps and Method

The first step of the operational research will be to identify the regional elite in chosen regions (the sample of regions is discussed below).

The second step will be the assessment of regional identity strength. The examination could cover historical review, number of regional civil initiatives related to the region, number of local-regional newspapers, review on earlier studies on the sense of regional identity in chosen Polish regions. Crucial to the analysis will be the exploration on elite consciousness of the region. The data would come from the interviews and questionnaires.

The third step would be the assessment of the quality of a regional elite. A number of tools can be applied for this purpose.

The degree of elite concordance is one approach towards the elite quality. It can be tested in interviews and by questionnaire. This method was developed by Christopoulos.

In the Polish case, particularly necessary will also be the analysis of the regional strategies — as examples of common vision of development. We should focus on how strategies have been prepared, by whom and what tensions appeared in this process.

In our opinion, crucial is the investigation of the intensity of regional networking. M.Castells in his impressive work stressed the role of networks in the globalised world.<sup>25</sup> He argued that *“the presence or absence in the network and the dynamic of each network vis a vis each other are the critical sources of domination and change in our societies”*. Cooke and Morgan’s research on associational economy,<sup>26</sup> M.Porter’s clusters,<sup>27</sup> and similar works by GREMI on innovative milieu, confirm the importance of networking. The programmes supported by the European Commission (e.g. ADAPT, RITTS) also prove that networking is taken seriously as a practical tool for regional competitiveness and growth.

Following these ideas we argue that the quality of the elite can be measured by its role in creating or entering and sustaining different networks



(inter-personal, business, regional, etc.). Thus, for the purpose of our research we should examine: the number of networks acting in a region, their size (number of partners), scope, field of action, range (regional, national), connections with international nodes (e.g. external networks of EU programmes, international cooperation, partnership with other European regions) and the eventual role there (e.g. participant, leader), number of actions undertaken and initiatives successfully implemented (the effectiveness of them — partnership strength), etc.

Finally, the last proposed tool for evaluation of the elite quality would be the intensity of regional lobbying towards central authority. The data could come from interviews and the review of newspapers (regional and national).

The above proposal of methods is initial in its character. It requires further consideration and critical assessment.

The last research step will be the comparison of the regional identity strength and the findings on regional elite quality.

## **The Sample**

In the first stage, we would like to test the experiences of four regions, which have a strong regional identity, visible regional elites and relatively strong economic performances leading to the development of the knowledge-based economy.<sup>28</sup> We are thinking about the following regions:

- Greater Poland (Poznań)
- Little Poland (Cracow)
- Lower Silesia (Wrocław)
- Upper Silesia (Katowice)

Additionally, two other regions could be selected as a reference point. They should represent regions with low initial identity (initial in the days of the regional reform). We could also include the example of the region with the divided elite (e.g. Kujawsko-Pomorkie or Lubuskie voivodships). This group would provide us with the ability to compare and benchmark. The research could cover all the regions of Poland and could be implemented in different European countries.

## **The Pitfalls and Challenges**

The first and the biggest difficulty is the range of the project. Research on such a wide scale requires resources and good networking between different academic centres.

Secondly, the definition of the basic concepts — identity and elite could cause some problems. A precise definition is required.

Thirdly, at this stage the methodology is not yet precise. It requires further consideration and probably testing on a smaller scale. The application of quantitative methods seems inevitable.

Fourthly, the subject of the research is difficult to approach. The elite can be hermetic and reserved for interviewing by academics from the outside (ie. other Polish regions).

Finally, difficulty can appear in applying this research to Poland due to the specific process taking place in the regions. There is a kind of back-wash effect in the regional elite in Poland. Part of the regional elite (especially political) treat the region as a mere platform for promotion to central level. Therefore, the most active part of the regional elite flows to the centre. The question is whether they are aware of the regional interests and work for the region or not. I do not know the scale of the phenomena, but it can distort the project.

## **Closing Remarks**

Despite the potential difficulties noted above we are convinced that the idea of the project on the regional elite is worth further consideration and initial preparation. The first step could be small, but research in this field needs to be addressed in the near future.

The latest theories and practice of regional development shows that endogenous factors grow in importance. Concordance and dynamism of the regional elite could be one of the leading factors in building the comparative advantage of regions. The proposed project aims to reveal this relation in the case of Poland.

This research would also provide a valuable input for the analysis of the absorption potential and partnership perspectives in Polish regions. In fact, it is directly related to the regional partnership promoted by the European Commission and our ability to use structural funds properly.

We have little knowledge on how the regional Polish elite are prepared to face the challenges of the coming future. This proposed set of monographic studies could at least partly fulfil this gap.

## **VIII. The Regional Elites and the Future of Europe**

Successful regional performance will create major contributions to the development of a competitive and prosperous Europe in the twenty-first



century. The regional elites in all parts of Europe can play an important role in this process.

In this context we would like to formulate a proposal to design and implement a large scale research Programme — analysing the experiences of the development of the regional elites in 50 well chosen regions in Europe using the adapted D.C. Christopoulos methods.

We hope, that the macro historical and macro geographical thinking presented in this paper will be useful also in the design and implementation of the proposed European Programme.

## Notes

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## Local Identity, Democratic Values, or Partisanship? Why Some Polish Citizens are More Content than Others with the Unpopular Local Governance Reforms

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Under Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek, the 1997 AWS-UW government embarked on an ambitious and wide-ranging programme of reform designed to remove the last vestiges of the communist interlude. Internationally that included Polish membership of NATO, achieved in 1999, and of the EU, expected to be only a few years later. Domestically it included the 'four reforms': of health-care, education, pensions and local government.

By 2001 there was widespread discontent with all of these reforms, though some were far more unpopular than others. Our focus is on the local governance reform, which provoked the least discontent. But our purpose is not to explain why that reform was unpopular, nor why it was less unpopular than the other reforms. Instead, our purpose is to explain the variations in its popularity: why were some citizens content with that reform while others were discontent? Above and beyond the factors of design and implementation that made it generally unpopular, but less so than other reforms, what gave it more (or less) appeal for some citizens than to others? We look at three main possibilities: that local governance reform appealed to sentiments of local identity, democratic values, or mere partisanship.

### **The Four Reforms: An EU 'Harmonisation' Package**

Under the health-care reform, 16 new 'Health Funds' were created, one for each new 'Voivod' (region). The reform introduced the Thatcherite 'purchaser-provider' dichotomy, and an 'internal market' (as in Britain,



this market was not purely 'internal') in state health care. The education reform was designed to 'harmonise' Polish education with that in EU countries, and introduce national 'standards' for attainment (again familiar to Thatcherite and Blairite Britain) but, at the same time, make all school education the responsibility of the new local and regional governments. The pensions or 'social security' reform changed the system from one in which current pension-payments were financed by current taxes to a more insurance-based system under which — at least in theory — current contributions would finance future pension-payments. Moreover these contributions would differ from taxes in two ways: they would be a mixture of mandatory and (additional) voluntary contributions and, partly in consequence of that, they would create individual pension accounts. The voluntary contributions would be invested by private insurance companies. Finally, the local governance reform set out to undo the centralisation of local government under Gierek and symbolically turn the clock back to a pre-communist past as well as looking forward to a new more participatory and devolved democratic future.<sup>1</sup>

Gierek had established Poland's highly centralised local governance system in 1975. He abolished the middle tier of local government (the Powiats — often translated as 'counties', though they are far smaller and more numerous than 'counties' in England), and tripled the number of upper-tier regions (Voivods) while transferring much of their power to central government — effectively diluting and downgrading the significance of regional government and abolishing local democracy.<sup>2</sup> Gierek's changes were more the consequence of a power-struggle within the ruling Communist Party than an expression of communist principles but the Gierek system became part of the general image of centralised communist authoritarianism. Consequently, democratisation of local governance became an important principle for Solidarity (in its underground writings and at the 1989 Round Table) and for its successors.<sup>3</sup> It would be a supremely 'visible' achievement in terms of decentralisation and — more importantly — in terms of democratisation. A modest — but too modest<sup>4</sup> — first step was taken by Tadeusz Mazowiecki's government in 1990 with the establishment of elected councils for Gmina (communes), the lowest tier of local government in Poland. The Buzek reforms aimed to reduce the number of Voivods, re-establish an elected middle-tier of Powiats, and decentralise power especially to this middle-tier.<sup>5</sup>

By a small margin, the public initially thought the Buzek local governance reforms would bring more advantages than disadvantages.<sup>6</sup> But as usual with any local governance reform anywhere, opponents alleged that they were ill-thought-out, that they would lead to administrative chaos,

extravagance, waste and higher taxes. In addition, the PSL (peasant party) and some dissident AWS-UW deputies feared that the local governance reform might 'destroy the fabric of the Polish nation and state' both by decentralisation within the state and by submission to the 'Germanic' external power of the EU,<sup>7</sup> though only the PSL, as a party, opposed the reforms in principle. However, plans for reform during the 1997–2001 parliament really got bogged down on a more symbolic issue — an unseemly dispute between President and Prime-Minister over whether the number of Voivods should be reduced from 49 to 12, or to 17 (the historic, pre-Communist number), or 15 — before an eventual compromise on 16 was agreed. In the process, some AWS-UW deputies rebelled against their own government<sup>8</sup> and the left-wing president was able to depict himself as seeking consensus, and depict the right-wing government as formulating reform plans that took insufficient account of public opinion. Thus, the dispute became as much about the style (sensitivity, consensus building versus majoritarian absolutism etc) of national governance as about the structure of local government itself.<sup>9</sup>

The regional reform 'appeared on the political agenda all of a sudden'. The coalition government had not highlighted the reform in its electoral platform. Indeed, 'most of its leaders were opposed to the reform or at least sceptical about it...Buzek himself was probably not fully aware of the consequences involved [and] accepted [what was] a private project of a group of conservative and liberal politicians and experts'.<sup>10</sup> As well as opening the reform to attack as 'ill-prepared' (at least in terms of public debate), the sudden, and especially the 'post-election' character of the reform has important technical implications for our analysis. It locates the reform plans as a post-1997 election event that might affect votes in 2001 but could not have affected votes in 1997.

From the beginning, opinion polls showed that the public thought the whole package of reforms 'ill-prepared' though the health care reform was the most criticised and the local governance reform the least.<sup>11</sup> Despite the Sejm majority for these reforms, public discontent remained high and there is some evidence that discontent with the local governance reform increased. CBOS found that the numbers who felt local government had got better or worse since the reform were almost evenly balanced in mid-2000, but by late 2000 public opinion had tilted towards the view that local government had got 'worse', and the trend continued into 2001 and intensified.<sup>12</sup> By then, the public could judge the implementation as well as the principle of the reforms.

Our own survey,<sup>13</sup> taken immediately after the September 2001 election, used a variant of the CBOS question. Respondents were asked



whether 'in their opinion' health care, education, the pensions system, and local government was 'currently working better or worse than before the reforms'. Answers were on a 5-point scale from 'much better' to 'much worse'. Very few (just two percent) had no opinion on the health reforms and opinion was overwhelmingly negative. On education and pensions much larger numbers (up to 21 percent) had no opinion and opinion was strongly but not overwhelmingly negative. On local governance, a smaller number (14 percent) had no opinion but an unusually large number (45 percent) felt local government was working neither better nor worse than before. And the balance of opinion on these local government reforms was negative, but only moderately negative.

Judged by an index of 'net discontent' — that is the excess of those (with a view) who responded 'worse' or 'much worse' rather than 'better' or 'much better' — the local government reform was very clearly the least unpopular of the four, though it was nonetheless unpopular. Net discontent ranged down from 58 percent on the health reforms, through 38 percent on education and 34 percent on pensions, to only 16 percent net discontent on the local governance reforms.

Table 1. Four Unpopular Reforms

	<i>Health reform %</i>	<i>Education reform %</i>	<i>Social Security reform %</i>	<i>Local Government reform %</i>
Reform made things...better	13	18	20	19
neither	16	27	25	45
worse	71	56	54	35
<b>net discontent (worse — better)</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>
DK (excl from calc of % above)	2	17	21	14

These four reforms had been presented as a package by Buzek's government. Internally, within Poland, the local governance reforms formed a platform from which to launch the other reforms. Proponents 'underlined that these changes constituted a necessary base from which to launch other key reforms, particularly in the areas of a national insurance system, health care, taxation...and education'.<sup>14</sup> As we have noted, the 'health funds' were to be controlled by the new regions, the 16 new Voivods. School education was to be controlled administratively by these new regions and the new middle-tier local governments (Powiats).

But in addition, all four reforms were also presented as part of a package aimed at 'harmonising' Polish and EU systems, thereby facilitating progress towards membership of the EU. In the case of local

governance reform, as well as decentralising and democratising local governance, and facilitating other internal reforms, it was designed to enable the Voivods to participate in the European network of development projects, investment grants, and structural funds. The new Voivods were similar in terms of size and competencies to the regions found in some EU countries (which had provided the rationale for the original proposal of just 12 large regions) and they were given the statutory right to engage in collaborative links with outside regions and other units. They were to become important actors in the construction of regional policy and the emerging network of supranational intergovernmental relations. The EU's pre-accession strategy encouraged this process by offering financial grants for projects submitted jointly by central and regional governments.

So it is not surprising that, despite the very sharp variation in levels of discontent with the four reforms, there was a very strong correlation between attitudes towards them. The intercorrelations averaged  $r = 0.49$ . Although some reforms were far more popular than others, the less content a person was with one reform, the less content they tended to be with all the others.

Nonetheless the intercorrelations, though strong, were not so strong that they reflected only a combination of the popularity of the specific reform on the one hand and the individual citizen's support for the composite package of reform on the other. It is difficult, but not completely impossible, to distinguish each citizen's attitudes to the four different reforms. Attitudes towards one reform only explain a quarter of the variation in attitudes towards any other (if  $r=0.49$ , then  $rsq=0.24$ ). So there is some possibility that attitudes to the local governance reform do in fact reflect specific attitudes to local governance rather than merely general attitudes to the 'package of four'.

**Table 2. Intercorrelations between attitudes to the four reforms**

	<i>health</i>	<i>pensions</i>	<i>local governance</i>
	$r \times 100$	$r \times 100$	$r \times 100$
education	54	54	52
health		43	46
pensions			43

Note: Correlations were calculated using the full 5-point scales running from 'much better' to 'much worse'.

## Theories of Local Governance

Mrs Thatcher's iconoclastic attitudes to local governance, and the radical reforms she introduced, made Britain for two decades the world's leading



'laboratory for experiments in local governance'.<sup>15</sup> Thatcher abolished some elected local governments. She transferred most of their powers — along with some of the powers of those elected local governments that remained — to central government or to un-elected local 'boards' that were either appointed by central government or were self-appointed but subject to the approval of central government. Of course, these were not experiments in democratising local governance as in Poland, but rather in *undemocratising* local governance. However they focused the attention of both scholars and the public onto the issue of whether there is a need or even a justification for democratic local governance — government that is at once both local and democratic. In particular, the creation and encouragement of various local but non-elected systems of local governance under Thatcher sharpened the distinction in the public mind between decentralisation on the one hand, and democratisation on the other.

In the Polish case, Buzek's local governance reform was an exercise in both decentralisation and democratisation at the same time. Whatever its merits, that combination clouds the conceptual distinction between the two. Both decentralisation and democratisation are generally popular but they are connected by popularity, not by logical necessity. This is particularly important for those theories of local governance that place great weight upon the elusive concepts of local community and local identity.

An in-depth study of public attitudes to local governance under Thatcherite conditions showed that local identities in Britain could be measured directly. They varied in convincing ways but, though variable, they were generally quite strong. Moreover, the varying strength of citizens' local identity had a clear impact on their attitudes towards systems of local governance — as traditional community or identity-based theories of local governance had so often emphasised.

Unfortunately for those identity-based theories, the impact of local identity was not of the kind they envisaged. The strength of local identity made very little difference to support for elected local governance — which was popular even amongst those who had very low levels of local identification. Instead, local identity had more impact upon support for the generally unpopular systems of non-elected local governance — local governance by users and providers of local services, or by appointed boards of experts or local businessmen. These non-democratic systems of local governance were generally unpopular — but they were significantly less unpopular amongst those with high levels of local identification. For strong local identifiers (and *only* for strong local identifiers) the 'localness' of such systems compensated somewhat for their undemocratic nature.<sup>16</sup>

The British experience under Thatcher simply reveals empirically the universal theoretical truth that systems of local democracy can be (and must be) justified on two very different grounds — that they are local and that they are democratic. Decentralisation and democratisation are always theoretically distinct, though much less frequently distinguishable empirically. In the case of Poland, the reforms aimed to do both. The reforms themselves — especially the reintroduction of so many (373) elected Powiats — could not be characterised as one more than the other. Nonetheless, public attitudes towards the reform might well reflect localism more than democratic values — or democratic values more than localist values.

The traditional ‘localist model’ of local governance<sup>17</sup> argues that it is a necessary expression of local identity, of commitment to and identification with the locality, as well as an expression of diverse local choice. Without a strong sense of local identity, local democracy is unnecessary and unsustainable in this view.<sup>18</sup> From this perspective, if there is no strong sense of local identity then centralised national government, applying national standards in the government of an essentially national community is not only sufficient but is actually preferable.

The ‘democratic model’ of local governance argues that local democracy is necessary for the health of national democracy. Even if there is no great sense of community or local identity, democratic local government provides a widespread training in democratic principles and procedures, which is an essential foundation for national democracy. Moreover, at this point in history, democracy is universally regarded as the only legitimate way to run any system government, be it central, regional or local. That is why even recent ‘incomers’ to a locality, or those with only a very weak sense of local identity, nonetheless give overwhelming support to the concept of local democracy. If there is to be governance of any kind, they feel it should be democratic.

Strong local identities could be accommodated by all manner of local institutions (not necessarily elected) — including civil institutions such as the Church as well as Thatcherite state-appointed administrative boards of experts — without any need for specifically democratic institutions at local level.<sup>19</sup> In former times local sentiment was accommodated by local government through local notables. But that is no longer acceptable. So in this view, local democracy is justified essentially by commitment to democracy and not by commitment to locality.

There is a third factor of considerable importance for public attitudes towards local governance however. That is partisanship.<sup>20</sup> Partisanship interacts both with localism and with reform. First, those who identify



with opposition parties in the national parliament naturally enough come to see the virtues of decentralisation and local autonomy more than those who identify with (national) governing parties. As parties alternate in power at the centre, they and their followers blow hot and cold on the virtues of local autonomy. When the constitution is not in flux, this is probably the predominant way in which partisanship affects attitudes to local governance. But secondly, those who identify with a party tend to take a favourable view of their own party's policy proposals, including its proposals for reform. They give their 'own' party the benefit of the doubt, especially on issues that are new, complex, or boring. They 'follow the party line'.

Of course, party identification in postcommunist Europe is notoriously weak, and the Polish party system has seen so many splits and new creations that it could reasonably be described as a system of 'meeting and parting' (a popular description of the Korean party system) which does not foster the development of specific party loyalties. Nonetheless there is more continuity than at first appears. Prominent politicians stay on the stage for longer than their parties, and recognisable 'party-families' persist through many changes of name and structure. In the Polish case we might look for identification with party-families, or with government and opposition, to play the role that specific party identification plays in the UK or USA.

So how significant were these three factors — *localism*, *democratic values*, and *partisanship* — in explaining the variation in attitudes towards the current local governance reforms in Poland?

### Local Identity?

We asked directly about sub-national, national and supra-national identities in Poland — as well as a variety of other identities. The answers show that regional (Voivod) identities are strong. Certainly they are far weaker than identification with family or nation. But they are far stronger than identification with Europe, with a 'class' or with a 'political party of any kind', and only a little weaker than religious identification. Three quarters of Poles expressed at least a 'rather strong' feeling of 'sympathy and belonging' to their Voivod — one quarter of them 'very strong'.

Unfortunately there was only space to ask about one sub-national identity in the Polish National Election Survey. So we have no direct measure of identification with the new Powiats. It is likely to be lower, because they are less 'historic' and also because people cross the boundaries of small areas such as Powiats far more often and for far more purposes than they cross the boundaries of larger areas such as Voivods. In Britain,

where we asked similar questions in a slightly different format,<sup>21</sup> the public also ranked identification with family and nation at the top and with ‘a political party’ at the bottom. And the intermediate rank-ordering of identity is also similar in the two countries except that the Poles identify much more strongly with a religion and rather less strongly with a class than do the British. What is of most immediate interest here is that identification with UK local government ‘districts’ (roughly equivalent to Polish Powiats) lagged only a little behind identification with UK regions (roughly equivalent to Polish Voivods) and they were more highly correlated than any other pair of identities ( $r=0.64$ ). So an informed guess might be that, for analytic purposes, our measure of Voivod identification may be a reasonable indicator of sub-national identifications in a broader, less specific sense.

Table 3. Identify — a sense of sympathy and belonging

	<i>with your family</i>	<i>with Poland</i>	<i>with a religion</i>	<i>with the voivod where you live</i>	<i>with Europe</i>	<i>with a class</i>	<i>with a political party</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
How strong a sense of sympathy and belonging?							
very strong	90	60	34	26	10	6	2
rather strong	9	35	44	49	42	28	16
rather weak / weak /none	1	5	22	25	48	66	82
index*	9.7	8.6	7.2	6.8	5.5	4.6	3.4
UK comparison	8.9	8.0	4.8	region 7.7 LG district 7.0	4.9	6.0	4.6

\*In the UK respondents were asked to give ‘marks out of ten’ as a measure of their strength of identification. Entries are average scores. For Poland, a comparable index has been constructed by scoring ‘very strong’ identities as 10, ‘rather strong’ as 7, ‘rather weak’ as 4, and ‘very weak/none’ as one — to allow rough comparisons.

Because it *is an identification*, sub-national identification partly reflects the fact that some people are ‘natural identifiers’. In consequence, all kinds of identification tend to be positively correlated rather than zero-sum. For example, because some people just identify to a greater degree than others with things outside themselves, sub-national, national, and supra-national identification are all positively intercorrelated.

Nonetheless, because it is specifically sub-national, sub-national identification also reflects a genuine attitude of localism or even parochialism. Thus, the old are more strongly committed to their locality than the young.



More importantly and less ambiguously, those whose grandparents lived in the same area are twice as likely to articulate a 'very strong' local identification as those who have arrived in the area within the last ten years. The sense of local identification (as measured by our question) grows with the time spent living in an area.<sup>22</sup> Conversely, strong local identifications are one-third less amongst those with personal experience of corrupt local officials making problems in order to get bribes from them. So in a variety of ways our explicit measure of local identification reflects the length and quality of local experience. It has real local content.

Sub-national identity is weaker amongst the highly educated and stronger amongst the most actively and devoutly religious. (See appendix) We might infer that education tends to detach people from their immediate environment while involvement with the church tends to attach people to their locality, even to their parish. Local identification is also much stronger in the former Austrian partition than in other regions of Poland perhaps because the Austrian partition, centred on Krakow, is so much more 'historic', perhaps just because it is particularly scenic — and for both reasons comfortable to identify with. By our measure, local identification is also much stronger amongst those who voted PiS (law and justice) or PSL (peasant party) in 2001 than amongst those who voted SLD-UP (socialists). The large numbers who had voted AWS (Solidarity) or UW (freedom Union) back in 1997 also had relatively strong local identities.

Interestingly our survey suggests that SRP voters (Samoobrona or Self-defence) in 2001 had relatively weak local identities, though not nearly so weak as non-voters. Non-voters in both the Sejm and the Presidential elections had disproportionately weak local identities. And conversely, although very few respondents had personally contacted politicians directly, those with very strong local identities were twice as likely (7 percent) as those with weak local identities (3 percent) to have done so in the past year. Other things being equal (which often they are not), identity encourages participation and participation encourages identity.

Identities are always elusive and often unstable but the pattern of correlations adds to our confidence that our measure of local identification really does indicate some emotional attachment to the locality. It is not a chimera, and not impossible to measure.

Yet support for the local governance reforms correlates only weakly (0.08) with the strength of sub-national identification — as measured by a 'sense of sympathy or belonging to the region (Voivod) where you live'. More objective measures of connection to the locality perform no better. Irrespective of whether their family had lived in the same area since the time

Table 4. The strength of sub-national identity

<i>Sub-national identification</i> (measured by how strong a sense of sympathy and belonging to Voivod)				
	<i>very strong</i>	<i>rather strong</i>	<i>rather weak / weak /none</i>	
	%	%	%	
By how long family have lived in this locality/area				
my grandparents already lived here	35	45	20	100%
my parents already lived here	23	48	29	100%
I moved here within last 10 years	17	54	29	100%
By whether in your personal experience local officials made problems in order to get bribes from you				
never	32	47	21	100%
yes, at least rarely	21	53	26	100%
By region				
former Austrian partition	35	46	18	100%
former Russian partition	27	46	27	100%
territories regained in 1945	23	50	27	100%
former Prussian partition	22	55	23	100%
By 2001 Sejm vote				
PiS (law and justice)	35	44	21	100%
PSL (peasant party)	35	50	15	100%
LPR (league of Polish families)	29	42	19	100%
All voters	28	53	19	100%
PO (civic platform — leaders ex AWS & UW)	27	55	18	100%
SLD-UP (Blairite socialists)	25	55	20	100%
SRP Samoobrona (self-defence)	23	57	21	100%
DNV	23	45	32	100%
By 1997 Sejm vote				
UW (freedom union)	34	42	24	100%
PSL (peasant party)	32	51	17	100%
AWS (Solidarity)	32	51	17	100%
SLD (Blairite socialists)	23	53	24	100%

Note: Remarkably, the survey figures for PSL and AWS identity, by 1997 Sejm vote, really are the same to the nearest whole percentage point — this is not a typo!

of their grandparents, or from the time of their parents, or whether they had moved to the area more recently, around 19 percent supported the reform.

Indeed support for the local governance reforms correlates equally well with the strength of Polish identification (0.08) and still more with supra-national European identification (0.10). Thus, support for, or discontent with, local governance reform is paradoxically more sensitive to the



strength of supra-national identification than to the strength of sub-national identification. That is more consistent with the way the whole package of four reforms was presented by the AWS-UW government as a 'harmonisation' of Polish and EU systems, necessary to make Poland acceptable to the EU, than it is consistent with a local democracy founded upon local community and identity.

**Table 5. Net discontent with local governance reforms — by local identification**

	<i>Net discontent with local government reform (% worse — % better)</i>	
	<i>by sub-national identification %</i>	<i>by supra-national identification %</i>
If sub-national (voivod) or supra-national (European) identification is		
very strong	10	1
rather strong	16	13
rather weak	21	20
very weak	27	32
correlation (r) =	0.08	0.10

## Democratic Values?

The local governance reforms were aimed at democratising as well as decentralising local government. So it is appropriate that support for these reforms was greatest, and opposition to them was least amongst those who were most committed to the principles and practice of democracy. Net discontent was 23 percent greater amongst those who denied that 'democracy is the best form of government'; 21 percent greater amongst those who denied that elections were an 'effective way to evaluate political leaders and parties'; and 27 percent greater amongst those who agreed that 'for people like me it does not really matter if the government is democratic or undemocratic'.

The correlation with evaluations of democratic practice was even greater than with democratic principle. Net discontent with the local governance reforms was 44 percent greater amongst those who were 'not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Poland'. And 61 percent greater amongst those who felt that elections in Poland did 'not at all well' at 'ensuring that the views of voters are represented by MPs'.

Another indicator of attitudes towards the practice of democracy is the public's trust in local and national officials — especially elected officials. Discontent with the local governance reforms correlates at 0.22 with public distrust of members of the Sejm, judges and courts, at 0.28 with public

**Table 6. Net discontent with local governance reforms — by democratic principles**

	<i>Net discontent with local government reform (% worse — % better) %</i>
Democracy is the best form of government?	
agree strongly	1
rather agree	17
disagree	24
Are elections an effective way to evaluate political leaders and political parties?	
definitely yes	10
rather yes	13
rather no	25
definitely no	31
For people like me it does not really matter if the govt is democratic or undemocratic?	
agree strongly	31
rather agree	20
rather disagree	8
disagree strongly	4

**Table 7. Net discontent with local governance reforms — by democratic performance**

	<i>Net discontent with local government reform (% worse — % better) %</i>
Satisfaction with the way democracy works in Poland?	
very, fairly satisfied	–1
not very satisfied	21
not at all satisfied	43
How well do elections in Poland ensure that the views of voters are represented by MPs?	
very well	–11
quite well	4
not very well	20
not at all well	50

distrust of ‘officials in state and local government offices’, and at 0.31 with public distrust of those elected to ‘local councils, the Gmina or Powiat’.

It is important to observe that opposition to the local governance reforms does not reflect a zero-sum, polarised ‘national versus local’ axis of distrust. A high level of distrust in Sejm members does not increase support for local democratisation. Quite the reverse. Instead there is evidence of a ‘greater or lesser relevance’ effect. Distrusting either national or local politicians increases opposition to the local governance reforms. But because distrust in local government politicians is more



Table 8. Net discontent with local governance reforms — by trust in elected officials

	<i>Net discontent with local government reform (% worse — % better)</i>			
	<i>by trust in members of Sejm</i>	<i>by trust in judges &amp; courts</i>	<i>by trust in officials in state and local govt offices</i>	<i>by trust in elected local councillors</i>
	%	%	%	%
If attitude to people/institutions is				
trust a lot	na	na	na	na
trust a little	-2	4	-7	-9
distrust a little	18	26	26	24
distrust a lot	39	37	42	49
correlation (r) =	0.22	0.22	0.28	0.31

na: too few expressed 'a lot' of trust for us to calculate reliable percentages

relevant to local governance it has the greater impact. Again this seems to emphasise the importance of democratic values, or attitudes to democratic performance, rather than localism as the key variable underlying support for local democracy in Poland.

Previous research has found<sup>23</sup> that opposition to local governance reform was greatest in villages and small towns — places where the level of trust (not distrust) in local governments was relatively high. It would be truly paradoxical if, contrary to our findings, those who trusted local councillors were more inclined to reject local democracy, but that is not in fact the case. The statistical theorem known as the 'Ecological Fallacy' warns that what is true for places is often not true for individuals (and vice versa).<sup>24</sup> So although discontent with the local governance reforms is greatest in the places with the greatest trust in councillors it is greatest amongst the people with the least trust in councillors.

Our own survey confirms that trust in local councillors is significantly higher in villages and small towns than in large cities. And also that discontent with the local governance reform is slightly higher in villages and small towns than in large cities.

But within both rural and urban areas, those who distrust local councillors are far more discontented with the reform — net discontent is around 40 percent greater amongst the distrustful. And amongst both the trusting and the distrusting, those who live in the rural areas are more discontented with the reform — net discontent is around 10 percent greater in the rural areas.

The slightly greater discontent with the reforms in the rural areas occurs *despite* greater trust in local councillors in rural areas, not because of it. Indeed, the specifically rural impact on discontent with the reforms is

**Table 9. Net discontent with local governance reforms — by trust in councillors and location**

	<i>Net discontent with local government reform (% worse — % better)</i>		
	<i>Amongst those who trust elected local councillors</i>	<i>Amongst those who distrust elected local councillors</i>	<i>impact of district (average 41%)</i>
Amongst those who live in places with			
more than 100,000 inhabitants	–15	+22	+37
less than 20,000 inhabitants	–9	+36	+45
impact of rurality (average 10%)	+6	+14	

underestimated because it is partially offset and obscured by the greater trust in local councillors in rural areas. It is likely that the specifically rural element of discontent with the local governance reforms reflects fears that rural areas might be swamped by merger with non-rural areas in the enlarged voivodships — one reason why the PSL opposed the change.<sup>25</sup>

## Partisanship?

Party sympathisers notoriously take a favourable view of any policy put forward or implemented by their ‘own’ party and an unfavourable view of those policies or reforms advocated or implemented by ‘other’ parties. In a multi-party system sympathy may be extended to coalition allies and antagonism focused on parties that are most clearly opponents. The local governance reforms are no exception. In principle they were supported by all parties in the Sejm except the PSL<sup>26</sup> but the details and the implementation were the responsibility of Jerzy Busek’s AWS-UW coalition government and the SLD used parliamentary and constitutional squabbles both to discredit the government and to disassociate itself from the much-criticised details.

Net discontent with the local governance reforms was 33 percent greater amongst those who described themselves as opponents, rather than supporters, of the former government. There was a similar though smaller difference of 23 percent (in the opposite direction, of course) between those who categorised themselves as supporters or opponents of the ‘new government’. And a massive 48 percent difference between (i) those who combined opposition to the old government with support for the new and (ii) the smaller number who combined support for the old government with opposition to the new.



Table 10. Net discontent with local governance reforms — by government partianship

	<i>Net discontent with local government reform (% worse — % better) %</i>
'supported' old govt	-6
'opposed' old govt	27
'support' new govt	22
'oppose' new govt	-1
'opposed' the old govt & 'support' the new govt	29
'supported' the old govt & 'oppose' the new govt	-19

Such findings raise the problem of causal directions however: did opposition to the AWS-UW government make people discontented with the reforms, or did discontent with the reforms turn them against the AWS-UW government?

Luckily, the way that the local governance reform plan was adopted so suddenly, not *at* but *after* the 1997 election,<sup>27</sup> means that we can establish a clear temporal — and therefore causal sequence running from 1997 Vote (at time 1) through the local governance reform and public reactions to it (at time 2) to 2001 Vote (at time 3).

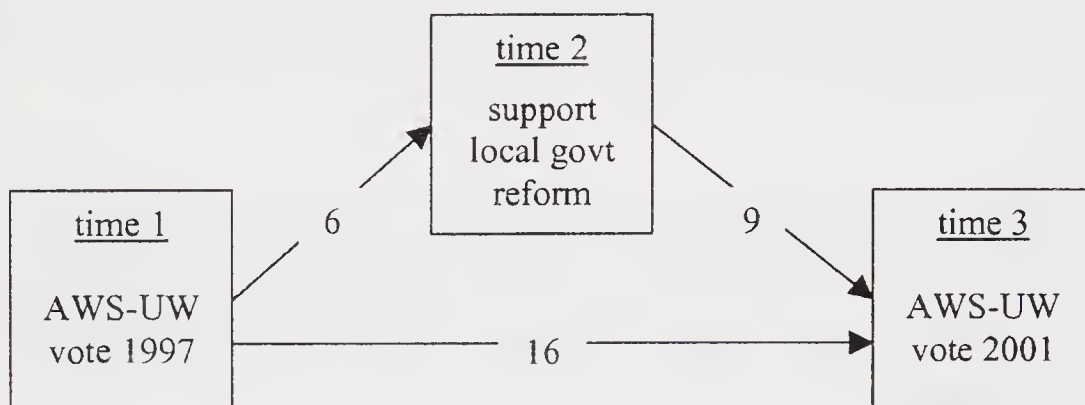
Table 11. Net discontent with local governance reforms — by party vote

	<i>Net discontent with local government reform (% worse — % better)</i>	
	<i>by Sejm vote in 1997 %</i>	<i>by Sejm vote in 2001 %</i>
AWS or UW	8	-21
SLD or UP	24	22
voted for any other party	18	7
did not vote / cannot remember	16	21
PSL	13	-9
SRP Samoobrona	na	29
PSL recruits		-7
PSL stand-pats		-13
all PSL defectors		26
PSL defectors to Samoobrona		32

For simplicity, let us divide the public into four categories, both in 1997 and 2001: (i) those who voted AWS or UW, (ii) those who voted SLD or UP, (iii) those who voted for any other party, and (iv) those who did not vote or (especially with regard to 1997) cannot remember how they voted. Net discontent with the local governance reforms is 16 percent greater

amongst the SLD-UP voters of 1997 than amongst the AWS-UW voters of 1997. But net discontent with the reform is 43 percent greater amongst the SLD-UP voters of 2001 than amongst the AWS-UW voters of 2001. (Our data suggests an especially close link between UW voting and support for the local governance reforms.) Taking the time-sequence into account this suggests that pre-existing partisanship (from 1997) had some impact on attitudes to the reform, but also that attitudes to the reform had its own impact upon subsequent voting in 2001.

Cross-tabulating 2001 votes by 1997 votes amongst those with positive, neutral and negative attitudes to the local governance reform suggests that reform attitudes had more impact on former AWS-UW voters than on others. And if we postulate a very simple recursive causal model including AWS-UW votes in 1997 and 2001 and attitudes to the reform, and estimate the path coefficients by regression, we get:



This model suggests that the impact of attitudes to the local governance reform on subsequent voting was greater than the impact of prior partisanship on attitudes to the reform. Nonetheless the impact of prior partisanship, though small, was statistically significant.

In 2001, disaffected Samoobrona (self-defence) voters were even more discontent with the local governance reform than SLD-UP voters. But the 2001 PSL (peasant party) voters were slightly favourable to the reform whereas 1997 PSL voters were (in 2001) unfavourable.

This may at first appear puzzling since, as a party, the PSL had been the only one in the Sejm to overtly oppose the reform. However, the PSL in 2001 was losing voters to the high-profile Samoobrona while picking up voters from the imploding remnants of the former AWS-UW coalition. Within our sample the pattern is very clear, though even with a large-sized sample such as ours (N=1794) the actual numbers of voters moving in and out of PSL voting are inevitably small and should be treated with some caution. Extrapolations to the whole electorate from small number of



respondents are dangerous but we must make cautious use of the only data that we have available.

Within our sample, therefore: The PSL lost two-thirds of its 1997 voters in 2001. Most of these defectors went to Samoobrona (22 percent of the PSL's 1997 voters) and abstention (27 percent of its 1997 voters). Conversely the PSL recruited two-thirds of its 2001 voters — 14 percent from AWS-UW, 9 percent from the SLD, and 46 percent from those who had abstained, forgotten how they voted, or been ineligible in 1997. Not surprisingly, the PSL's recruits were less antagonistic towards the local governance reforms than its defectors, especially its defectors to the more radical and more nationalistic Samoobrona.

## **An Overview: Regression Analysis**

We have used regression to get an overview of the relative impact of the various influences upon discontent with the local governance reforms:

### **A. Locality**

1. spatial identifications — measured by how much respondents felt a sense of belonging to their national area (Poland), to sub-national areas (their Voivod) and to a supra-national area (Europe).

### **B. Democracy**

2. support for the principle of democracy — measured by whether democracy is 'the best system' and by whether it 'really matters whether government is democratic or undemocratic'.
3. attitudes towards the practice of Polish democracy — measured by whether respondents are 'satisfied with the way democracy works', by their assessment of 'how well elections ensure that the views of voters are represented', and by their trust in elected local councillors.

### **C. Prior partisanship**

4. prior partisanship — measured by whether or not respondents voted AWS-UW in 1997, and whether or not they voted SLD-UP in 1997.

Table 12. Regression predictions of net discontent with local governance reforms

	<i>RSQ x 100%</i>	<i>Beta coefficients (standardised regression coefficients; path coefficients)</i>			
		<i>distrust elected local government councillors</i>	<i>dissatisfied with democracy in Poland</i>	<i>elections do not ensure voters' views are represented</i>	<i>voted AWS or UW in 1997</i>
Step 1:	9	30			
Step 2:	13	28	21		
Step 3:	14	26	19	10	
Step 4:	15	26	18	10	-7

Variables excluded by the stepwise regression, as adding nothing significant to the prediction, include both measures of attitudes to democratic principle, and all measures of spatial identification.

Using these 10 variables in a stepwise regression suggests that:

- spatial identifications are insignificant — support for the democratisation of local governance owes nothing to the strength of local identity (nor to the strength of national or supra-national identity) once other influences are taken into account
- commitment to democratic principle is insignificant — support for the democratisation of local governance owes nothing to commitment to the principle of democracy
- but evaluations of democratic performance in Poland are important — support for the democratisation of local governance owes something to positive views about how well democracy actually functions in Poland, and most of all to whether respondents trust the kind of people who have been elected as local councillors
- and prior partisanship also seems of some importance — those who voted AWS-UW in 1997 are somewhat more inclined than others to support the reform of local governance. (Using general ‘support’ for the AWS-UW coalition, or 2001 vote, as a partisan indicator would inflate the apparent impact of partisanship but that would spuriously compound cause and consequence.)

In short, attitudes to the local governance reforms do not reflect *localist* so much as democratic values, and do not reflect attitudes to democratic principles so much as attitudes to democratic practice. Beyond that, we have detected a statistically significant but relatively weak impact of prior partisanship on attitudes to the AWS-UW’s local governance reforms. Given the weakness of partisanship in the fluid Polish party system it is perhaps more remarkable that we have detected any partisan influence at all than that the partisan impact is weak. But local identities



are not weak, and the absence of any significant impact from local identity reflects the democratic rather than localist basis of support for the local governance reforms.

## Appendix

<i>Sub-national identification</i> (measured by how strong a sense of sympathy and belonging to Voivod)				
	<i>very strong</i>	<i>rather strong</i>	<i>rather weak / weak /none</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	
By attitude to role of the church: church should				100%
exert political influence	35	42	22	100%
stay out of politics	23	51	26	100%
By church attendance				
several times a week	31	56	13	100%
once a week	30	50	20	100%
two or three times a month	23	53	24	100%
once a month	17	51	31	100%
several times a year	20	47	33	100%
never	23	35	42	100%
By devoutness				
agnostic	17	52	31	100%
believer	24	51	25	100%
devout	38	46	16	100%
By age				
oldest third (born before 1950)	33	50	17	100%
middle third	25	51	24	100%
youngest third (born after 1966)	20	47	33	100%
By education				
elementary (& elem incomplete)	32	46	22	100%
vocational	27	50	23	100%
secondary technical	21	55	24	100%
secondary gymnasium	25	43	32	100%
university	22	46	32	100%

## Notes

- 1 For a brief history of local governance reform in post-communist Poland, and trends in public support for these reforms, see Pawel Swianiewicz. 'Sympathetic disengagement: public perception of local government in Poland' in Pawel Swianiewicz (ed) *Public Perception of Local Governments* (Budapest: Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative, Open Society Institute, 2001) pp. 169–222.
- 2 Andrzej W. Jablonski. 'The Europeanisation of government in Poland' in Karl Cordell (ed.) *Poland and the European Union* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000) pp. 127–144. The 1975 reforms are discussed on p.140.
- 3 For a discussion of the evolution of relations between central and local government in Poland see Jablonski, pp. 138–142.
- 4 Jablonski, p. 140.
- 5 *East European Constitutional Review* 7: no.2 pp. 20–23. For a more extended account see Wieslaw Bokajlo 'The reform of Polish local government, and the Europe of the Regions' in Karl Cordell (ed.) *Poland and the European Union* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000) pp. 145–164.
- 6 Swianiewicz, pp. 194–6.
- 7 Bokajlo, p. 149.
- 8 Bokajlo, pp. 148–151.
- 9 *East European Constitutional Review* 7: no.3 pp. 24–5.
- 10 Jan Rokita MP. 'Continuity and change in Polish policy after the regional reform in 1998'. Paper to *SSEES Conference: Regionalization of the Polish Political Scene* (15–16 April 2002) p. 1. Rokita 'proudly' claims membership of that group.
- 11 Demoskop poll quoted in *Central Europe Review* vol.1, no.10, 30<sup>th</sup> August 1999.
- 12 CBOS. *Polish Public Opinion*. February 2001, p. 3.
- 13 The Polish National Election Survey, funded by the Polish Academy of Sciences and the British ESRC (under grant R000223685). There were 1,794 respondents.
- 14 Bokajlo, p. 158.
- 15 William L. Miller, Malcolm Dickson and Gerry Stoker. *Models of Local Governance* (London: Palgrave, 2000) pp. 1–2, 11–32. The quotation is from the cover.
- 16 Miller, Dickson and Stoker, p. 125.
- 17 Miller, Dickson and Stoker, p. 28 and pp. 190–191.
- 18 Jerzy Regulski. 'Regionalisation: A failure or a step toward a new system of power?' Paper to *SSEES Conference: Regionalisation of the Polish Political Scene* (15–16 April 2002) p. 2.
- 19 Miller, Dickson and Stoker. pp. 220–225.
- 20 Miller, Dickson and Stoker. pp. 251–261.
- 21 Miller, Dickson and Stoker. p. 55.
- 22 For comparable evidence in the UK see Miller, Dickson and Stoker. p. 58.
- 23 By comparing CBOS and OBOP surveys for 1998 and 1993. See Pawel Swianiewicz. op.cit. at pp. 183, 195 and 197.
- 24 The classic account is in W.S. Robinson. 'Ecological correlation and the behaviour of individuals' *American Sociological Review* (1950) 15:351–71.



For its complex effects on political behaviour see W.L. Miller 'Social class and party choice in England: a new analysis' *British Journal of Political Science* (1978) 8:257–84 or Ian McAllister, Ron J. Johnston, Charles J. Pattie, Helena Tunstall, Danny F. Dorling, and David J. Rossiter. 'Class dealignment and the neighbourhood effect' *British Journal of Political Science* (2001) 31:41–59.

- 25 Tomasz Zarycki. 'The regional dimension of the Polish political scene'. Paper to *SSEES Conference: Regionalisation of the Polish Political Scene* (15–16 April 2002) p. 7.

26 *East European Constitutional Review* 7: no.2 p.21.

27 Rokita — op.cit.

## Conclusion





# The Regional Dimension of the Polish Political Scene

Tomasz Zarycki

## **The Relevance of the Regional Dimension in the Polish Politics**

The regional dimension of Polish politics has been undoubtedly gaining more and more importance in the period of the first post-Communist decade. The processes of democratisation and decentralisation were among the most important factors behind this fundamental evolution. Bestowed with the possibility of self-expression and new competencies, Polish regions are gradually becoming more and more visible on the previously homogenous political map of Poland. On the other hand however, Polish politics are still far from becoming truly regionalised, and as some would argue, it is the mere size of the country which makes the analysis of the regional issues justified, rather than the logic of the Polish political system. Poland, if compared with several other countries, still remains a relatively uniform and centralised state. At the same time, in certain dimensions, as for example the development of regional political parties, the extent of the regionalisation of Polish politics has, in fact, been reduced in the past few years. Thus, as some could argue, the regionalisation of Polish political life is a rather secondary phenomenon, the study of which does not contribute to any deeper understanding of the logics of Polish politics.

The question as to whether the study of the regional dimension of Polish politics is an undertaking worth any effort could be related to a much more general theoretical dispute over the importance of the regional (or geographical) dimension in the analysis of the social processes. One of its most interesting manifestations in the discourse of contemporary political geography is the debate between the proponents and opponents of the so-called "theory of contextual effects". Thus, on one hand, we find those arguing for the role of the analysis of spatial differentiations of social phenomena (or, in other words, social geography). They are seen as



crucial for an understanding of the deeper mechanisms of social life (and in particular politics, thus also voting behaviour). Every social phenomenon, as it is argued, should be analysed in its geographical, regional context. It is only the knowledge of this regional context that makes any social action meaningful for the external observer. Geographical context is therefore seen as an indispensable condition of the analysis of politics. Agnew (e.g. 1996) is a typical representative of such a point of view. On the other hand, we find those arguing that the regional context of political life does not add much to our knowledge of social phenomena and can, in fact, be identified with the structural characteristics of a given regional community. King (1996) is one of the best representatives of this school of thinking. In this perspective, the analysis of the regional context has a purely descriptive role. In other words, it may expand our knowledge about a particular locality or region, but will not allow us to learn anything more about the social logic of a given society. Regional analysis is thus seen here just as one of the possible dimensions of the description of the social system, but not one at which its fundamental structures could be revealed.

However, as it seems, besides the differentiation between the two theoretical approaches, one could also make a distinction between countries or even regions from the point of view of the role the regional analysis can play in them. We could thus differentiate between those regions in which the knowledge of regional differentiation is a useful or even indispensable component of understanding of social (and in particular political) processes, and those in which, even if regional differentiations do exist, knowledge about them is not such a necessary condition of understanding of their political life. One could therefore ask a question: to what extent the analysis of the regional dimension of political life is indispensable for the understanding of Polish politics. Is it just an interesting addition to the general knowledge about contemporary Polish society, or a crucial condition for explanation of its specificity? While this paper could be seen as a reflection on the issue, it will not provide any clear-cut answer to such a question. However, I would like to point out a number of aspects of the regional dimension of contemporary Polish politics.

First, I will discuss the issue of regional differentiation of the Polish political scene and the problem of political regionalism.

Secondly, I will deal with the differences between regionalisation of Polish politics and politicisation of regionalisation of Poland.

Finally, I will discuss the discrepancies between the process of regionalisation of national politics and nationalisation of regional and local politics.

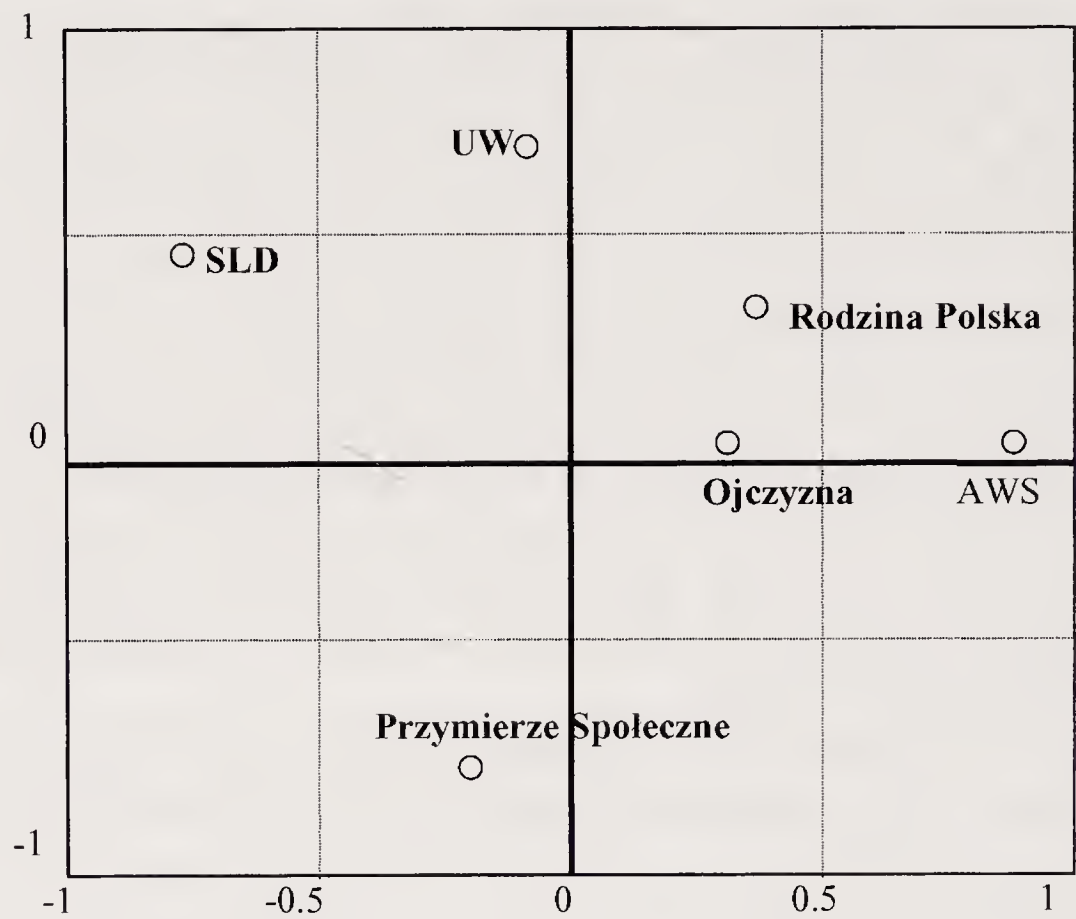
## Regional Differentiation of the Polish Political Scene

As it became obvious in 1989 after the first almost democratic election opening the post-Communist era of Polish politics, Poland has a relatively deeply differentiated and interesting historically conditioned electoral geography. There are two important features of Poland's electoral geography worth mentioning in this context. First, it has a very clear two-dimensional structure, which in its very essence is almost identical with the structure of the Polish political scene. In other words, one can say that the Polish political scene has a very clearly defined regional dimension. The second important feature of Polish electoral geography is its considerable stability that can, to a large extent, be linked to its deep historical roots. As it appears, the basic structures of Poland's electoral geography are almost independent of constant evolution of the political scene in its institutional dimension.

I have described the geography and stability of the two dimensions of Polish electoral geography in the period from 1990 to 1997 in some of my previous publications (e.g. Zarycki 1997, 2002, Zarycki & Nowak 2000). Let me briefly remind that the two main cleavages of the Polish political scene in 1990s were the so-called left-right and the rural-urban divides. In institutional terms, the left-right cleavage, also known as the "axis of values" or "post-Communist vs. anti-Communist axis", the Social Democrats (SLD) were opposed to various parties of the broadly defined and constantly evolving right. In the 1990 and 1995 presidential elections, the Right was represented by Lech Wałęsa, while in the 1997 parliamentary elections by AWS (Electoral Action "Solidarity") coalition. On the second axis, known also as the "axis of interests", the liberal urban electorate is opposed to peasants. In the institutional dimension the liberal pole was represented in different periods by such parties and candidates as Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Jacek Kuroń, the Freedom Union (UW) or the Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD) and several others. As it appears, such a two-dimensional structure of the Polish political scene emerged from all kinds of studies, including survey analyses of Poland's electorate or studies of programmatic divisions on the Polish political scene. Moreover, the same result could be obtained from studies based on voting statistics in the regional breakdown. In my own analyses, I have performed calculations based on the method of factor analysis. For each presidential or parliamentary election since 1990, votes for major candidates or parties in every commune (*gmina*) were analysed. In all cases, with the exception of 1990 elections when Stanisław Tymiński created an additional third dimension, a two-factor solution appeared. Analysis of factor loadings gave an insight



Figure 1. Scatter diagram of factor loadings of 1998 regional elections

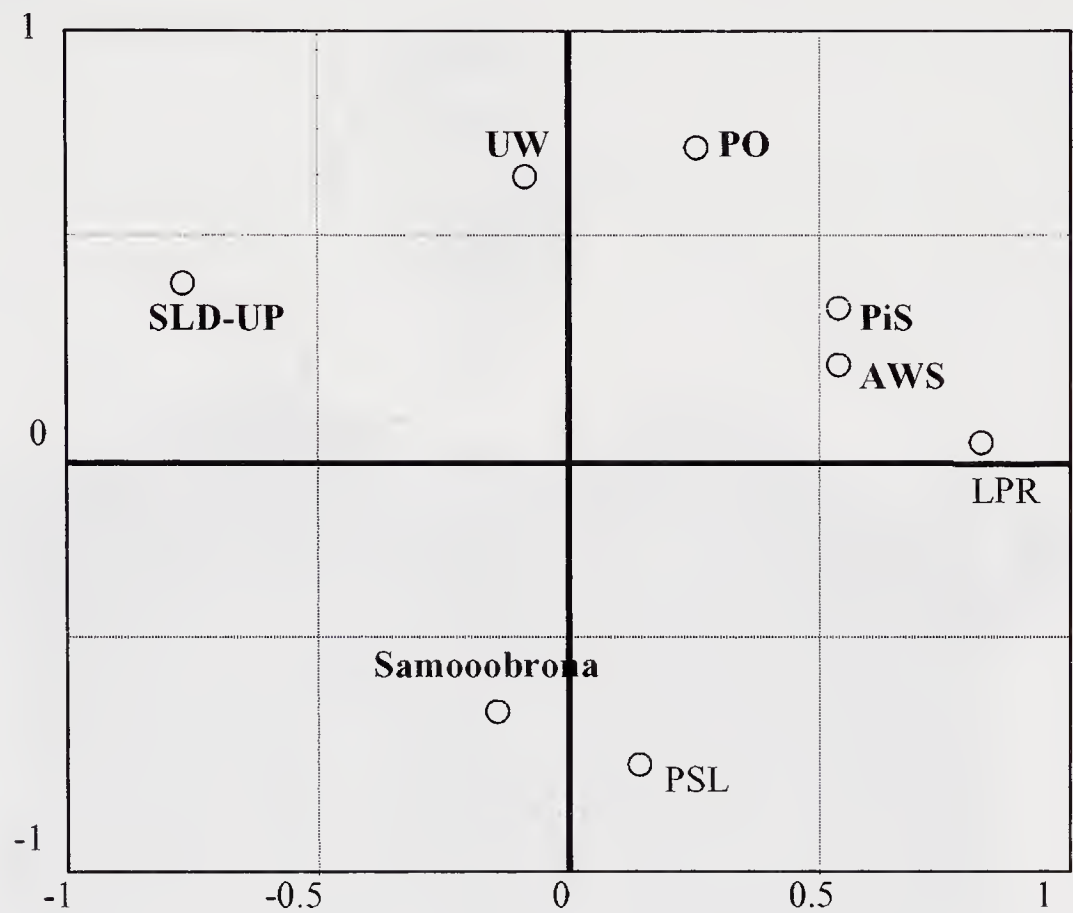


**Regional elections 1998 (Regional parliaments “Sejmiki” Party Lists votes)**

- Rural-urban factor - vertical - 25% variance explained
- Left-Right factor - horizontal - 27% variance explained

into the “political” nature of the obtained axes. The results of the analysis of the results of the recent elections of 1998 and 2001 are presented in Tables 1 and 2. The relative location of parties as defined by factor loading is displayed on graphs in figures 1 and 2. As it is easy to see, in both cases the same pattern of the left-right and the urban-rural oppositions appears. Even more interesting was the geographical aspect of both factors. Mapping factor scores of both dimensions on a map of Poland’s communes allows to obtain synthetic maps of electoral geography of both dimensions. Figures 4 and 5 present maps of the first and second factor as they emerged in the analysis of 2001 parliamentary elections. I have described and interpreted both maps in my previous papers. Let me just remind readers that one of their most interesting features was a very clear imprint of the heritage of the nineteenth century partitions of Poland. In the case of the map of the Left-Right dimension, the most important stronghold of the Right was to be found in the former Austrian region of Galicja (Małopolska). Other traditional Right-voting areas included Podlasie in the North-Eastern part of the country and the Kaszuby region

Figure 2. Scatter diagram of factor loadings of 2001 parliamentary elections



**Parliamentary elections 2001**

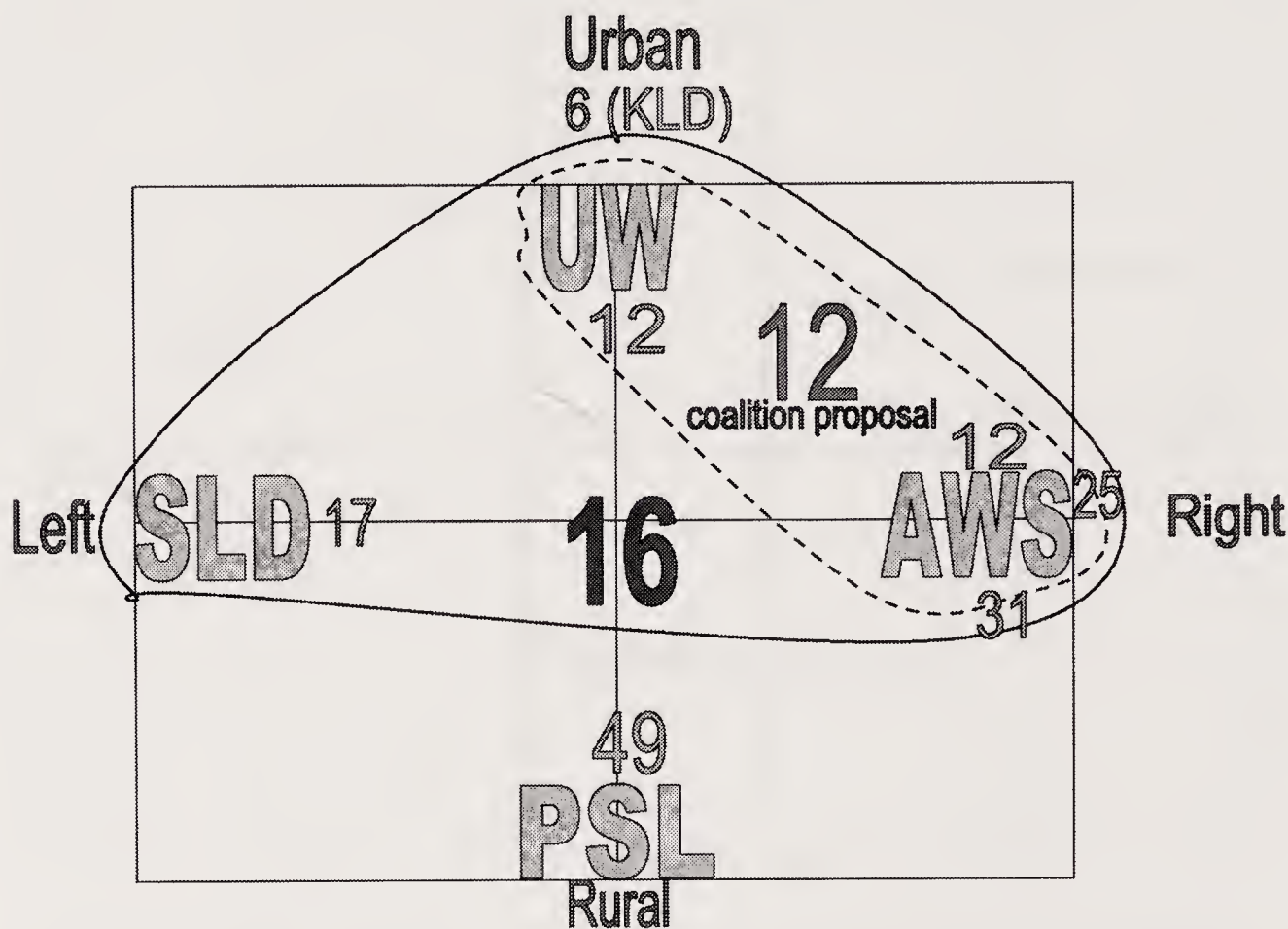
- Rural-urban factor - vertical - 32% variance explained
- Left-Right factor - horizontal - 24% variance explained

in the North. The left has its primary support areas in the former German lands (Western and Northern Territories) and former Prussian zone. As far as the rural-urban dimension is concerned, the former Russian zone appears to be the most important stronghold of the peasant parties and their candidates. The main exception are cities, especially larger towns which are very clearly visible on the map.

What was one of the most striking conclusions from the study of the geography of the two main cleavages of the Polish political scene was its very high degree of stability since 1990 or, in fact 1989, when for the first time, the geography of the left-right dimensions was revealed. In each analysis since that moment the maps that appeared were almost identical although the level of support of parties and candidates was, of course, changing over the years. The impression of similarity was confirmed by statistical analysis – in most cases correlations between maps of the same factor from different years attained values over 0.7 of Pearson r correlation



**Figure 3. Support for the regional reform projects by main Polish political parties**



coefficient. This result was especially interesting given the well known volatility of the Polish political scene over the last decade. However, as it appears, despite numerous institutional transformations, disappearances, splits, mergers, party name changes and constantly changing voters preferences, the very regional basis of Polish politics remains unchanged. It is founded on very deep historical and structural differentiations which seem not to be influenced by the short-term changes of the political scene.

This conclusion, as it appears, was not undermined by the results of the most recent elections, which I have not analysed in my previous publications. Thus, both the 1998 regional elections as well as presidential elections of 2000 and the last parliamentary elections of 2001 confirmed the stability of the two-dimensional structure of the Polish political scene, as well as its geographical dimension. The maps which appeared in the results of the factor analysis of the votes on the main party lists on the gmina level have again the same patterns. Also this time they were highly inter-correlated. For example, the rural-urban dimension correlation coefficient between the factor scores of 1998 and 2001 elections equalled to  $r=0,691$ , while in the case of the Left-Right dimension, the similarity of maps from 1998 and 2001 was even higher ( $r=0,769$ ).



Figure 4. Map of factor scores values of the first factor in 2001 elections (the rural-urban dimension)

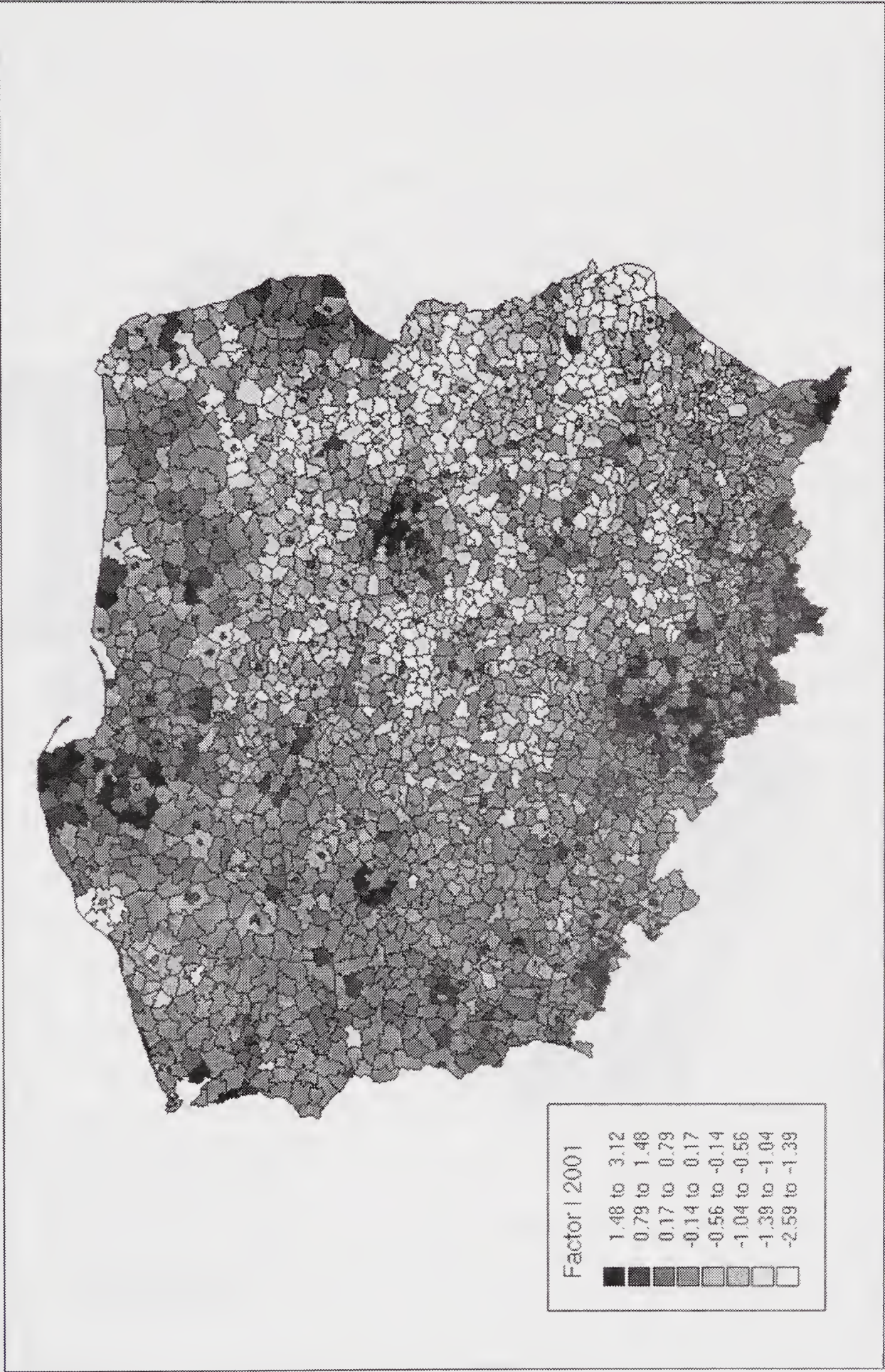




Figure 5. Map of factor scores values of the second factor in 2001 elections (the left-right dimensions)





This result is especially interesting if we consider a number of important changes in Polish politics which took place in the period after 1997. They include:

- The alliance between the Peasant Party (PSL) and Labour Union (UP) in 1998 regional elections. The two parties formed the so-called Social Alliance (PS) which could be the beginning of a new type of the leftist political party. However, at it appeared the UP was in fact marginalised by the PSL and the coalition's geographical pattern of support did not differentiate considerably from the traditional geography of PSL support with highest level of backing in the rural areas former Russian partition zone.
- The emergence of the conservative Catholic anti-European coalition — the Polish Family (RP — “Rodzina Polska”) in 1998 elections did not distort the structure of the Polish political scene or country's electoral geography. RP was mainly drawing on the traditional anti-Communist electorate, a more religious and less educated part of the Right electorate. The same is true about Łopuszański in the 2000 presidential elections as well as another incarnation of RP which appeared in the 2001 parliamentary elections, namely the League of Polish Families (LRP — Liga Rodzin Polskich). Both of the organisations were closely linked with the well known anti-European Radio Maryja. The geography of support of LRP in 2001 appeared in fact even more classic (similar to the traditional pattern of support of the right in Poland) than other right parties as the “Solidarity” Electoral Action of the Right (AWSP) or Law and Justice (PiS — *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*). Not surprisingly PiS' geography of support reminded the maps of votes for the Centre Alliance (PC — *Porozumienie Centrum*) — a party under the same leadership of the Kaczyński brothers at the beginning of 1990. The characteristic trait of PC and PiS patterns of support are lower levels of votes in the rural areas of Eastern Poland (in relation to the relatively high support of the traditional Right in this part of the country) and particularly strong support in the suburbs of Warsaw, as well as those of some other large cities.
- The split of the Freedom Union (UW — *Unia Wolności*) and the emergence of the Civic Platform (PO), which were undoubtedly very important events in the contemporary history of the Polish political scene, did not however produce any revolution in the electoral geography of the country either. UW retained its traditional pattern of support with a higher level of backing in large cities and former German territories. The Civic Platform as a more conservative party



which inherited part of the former right block (in particular AWS) electorate had a pattern of support which was a mixture of the urban-liberal and typical right's electoral geographies. PO is both supported in cities as well as in rural areas of such conservative regions as Kaszuby (traditional stronghold of KLD) or Podhale, not so much in Podlasie however, which prefers rather less liberal parties as LRP or PiS.

- The most interesting element of the regional dimension of the 2001 parliamentary election seems to be a completely new pattern of support of "Samoobrona" (Self-defence). This seems to be the case of the most important evolution from the previous parliamentary elections of 1997. Samoobrona in fact transformed from a regional into truly national party. While in 1997 its pattern of support was strongly linked to the proximity to Darłowo — the home town of its leader Andrzej Lepper (the farther from Darłowo the smaller were the influences of Samoobrona), in 2001 the party pattern of support had a clearly structural rather than regional character. Self-defence's electoral map became clearly similar to the Peasant Party map. On the scatter plot on Figure 7 we see however that Samoobrona is slightly closer to the SLD, while PSL leans slightly towards the Right side of the political scene.

As far as the programmatic evolution of the Polish political scene is concerned, I view it as transformation from Eastern-oriented to Western-oriented politics, where the attitude towards the dominating centre (earlier Moscow, now increasingly broadly defined West and EU in particular) are the basis of the main political cleavages.<sup>1</sup> In such a perspective, I see Samoobrona and LRP as the main parties representing the peripheral resistance towards the new centre in respectively economic (interests) and identity politics (values) dimensions. While the emergence and strengthening of the anti-European sentiments in both aspects could be and was in fact predicted much earlier, the fact that this important change in the structure of the Polish political scene is not disrupting the logic of the electoral geography of the country was not so obvious. Thus, as it seems, while the supra-national centre is moving from East to West, the internal geography of centres (or regions accepting the dominance of the Poland's supra-national centre) and peripheries (regions resisting the dominance) appears to be unexpectedly stable. This may be not so surprising as far as the economic (rural-urban) dimension is concerned. The centre in this case was in fact always located in the West (see Zarycki 2002), however, in the case of the left-right dimension, we are dealing with a clear redefinition of the nature of this political cleavage.

## Regionalisation of vs. Politicisation of Regionalisation of Poland

As I mentioned earlier, the existence of considerable regional differentiations, which can, for example, be observed on Poland's electoral map, does not imply that regional issues play an important role in the political life of the country. In fact in the case of Poland, the very awareness of the existence of the above mentioned differentiations became known more widely only after the fall of Communism. While some regions display a considerable specificity or even extremism in their voting behaviour patterns, only a few of them may be considered as having a clearly developed regional identity. Thus, with such notable exceptions as Upper and Opole Silesia, Podhale and to a lesser extent Greater Poland, regions and regional issues do not dominate national Polish political discourse and attitudes towards them are not significant elements of the main political cleavages. A major breakthrough in this respect was however the regional reform of 1998. Attitudes towards different projects of regional reform become an important division on the Polish political scene. I will not discuss here the history of the conflict in detail.<sup>2</sup> Instead, I will present the major propositions put forward by different political camps. They include:

- The most radical variant supported by the free-market liberal fraction of the anti-Communist Solidarity elites assumed the creation of **6 to 10** big autonomous regions or *Pol-lands* as some have called them since they would have similar constitutional powers as the German *landers*. As Gorzelak (2001) argued, “the proposal of ‘Pol-lands’ was rejected, since Poland in its 1,000 year history — with a short interval of feudal fragmentation in the Middle Ages — has been a unitary state and there were no traditions of federalism in the country. The unitary character of Poland became since then an openly formulated principle that shaped all future deliberations”. In fact, the proposal of the six autonomous regions, most often associated with the Liberal-Democratic Congress, after the initial period of the transformation was never considered as a valid political option. It was however, an important point of reference in the subsequent debate.
- The mainstream post-Solidarity parties, forming the ruling coalition in the period of 1997–2001 (AWS and UW) proposed a division of the country into 12–13 regions. This project was based on an assumption that a large region can function properly only when it is based on a capital city big enough and rich enough in institutions, intellectual and human capital that enable the region to “be visible on the international stage”. Nine Polish cities were considered to meet the criteria of “strong regional centres”. The list included Warsaw, Kraków,



Wrocław, Poznań, Łódź, the conurbation of Katowice, Szczecin, the “tri-City” of Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot and Lublin. Additionally, three cities were designated to fill “the vacuum” in the East border regions with no strong urban centres. They were Olsztyn, Białystok and Rzeszów.<sup>3</sup> As it was decided, an additional 13<sup>th</sup> voivodship in the centre could have two capitals: Bydgoszcz and Toruń. The regions would have a mixed character: they would have a partly self-governed, partly centrally administrated character.

- Several intermediate proposals for creating some 25–31 regions were supported by different political camps including the post-Communist Social-democrats (SLD) and more conservative right groupings especially the more religious and anti-European factions of the Solidarity camp. Most feared that big regions would weaken both the state, making it vulnerable to the Western and particularly German interference and former medium-sized capital cities.
- Retention of the 49 regions system was supported first of all by the Peasant Party (PSL) which was the main beneficiary of the old system. Their position was probably mainly liked to the fact that the bigger the regions, the smaller the political representation of the Peasant Party in the parliament.

The reform has been under consideration by the first post-Solidarity governments, especially that of prime minister Suchocka (1991–1993). However, no consensus was reached before the 1993 elections which brought the post-Communist Social Democrats to power. During their four years term the reform was, in fact, frozen. The subsequent right coalition government of Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) and Freedom Union (UW), which came to power in 1997 started the new round of debates over the new administrative structure of the state. The proposal which was finally approved by the government became a part of a big set of structural reforms of the state. They have included radical reforms of the health care system, pension system and educational system. As mentioned above, the government proposal assumed introduction of 12 voivodships based on large urban centres and linked to the historical regions.

The governmental White Paper has been strongly criticised from several sides. Some of the major arguments of the opposition included the following theses:

- The reform will weaken of the unitary structure of the state. The centre may lose control over the regions. From this point of view, as it was argued, Poland would become extremely susceptible to external influences. Especially those fearing the political and economic integration

of Poland with the West and European Union in particular have been strongly concerned about excessive autonomy of the regions. For some, the German threat was particularly important, as many Poles still fear alleged German ambitions of regaining control over the lands lost in 1945. For them, Poland's entry into the EU coupled with the weakening of the unity of the state could have such consequences. Some of the opponents of the reform argued that it is based on the German model of regionalisation, where the traditions of regional autonomy have deep roots in contrast to Poland. They also suggest that the division of Germany into *landers* was supported by the Allies after 1945, who feared a strong German state and tried to weaken it by the federalisation. Some of the critiques feared the development of separatism in Poland and an example of the Italian region of Padania was used in this context (Jabłoński, Potoczek, 1998).

- The reform will increase of the number of levels of administration which will not contribute to the functionality of the system. An additional tier of administration may lead to an increase of bureaucracy.
- The reform represents a real danger of decline in the medium-sized cities which owe their development to obtaining the status of region capitals with the 1975 reform. Losing their status of regional capitals will imply massive unemployment and economic crisis in and outside the large urban centres.
- There is no real need for such a fundamental and revolutionary reform, especially in the context of the other important structural reforms which will considerably disrupt the functioning of the state. Thus, the authors of the reform was accused of being rather ideologically than pragmatically motivated.

The proponents of the reforms have refuted most of these arguments. The perspective of the integration of Poland with the European Union was seen as an important argument for reform. While the supporters of the reform would not see any major threat for Poland's sovereignty over its territory stemming from the integration process, they argued that large, strong regions are indispensable in order to profit fully from the integration with the EU.

An important element in the pro-reform discourse was an argument that the new partly self-governed, large regions will create conditions for the development of the grass-roots initiatives, entrepreneurship and will release energy curbed by the structures of the post-Communist centralised state. This could be seen as an element of the anti-Communist discourse in which regional reform was presented as yet another delayed element of



destruction of the authoritarian heritage and building of a truly democratic state and Western European style civil society. In this context, the need for the "development of regional identity" became one of the crucial elements of the rhetoric of the government and its supporters. Strong regional identity, as it was suggested by the supporters of the reforms, is necessary for the involvement of the inhabitants of the regions in their economic and social development. The other assumption seemed to be that regional identity may develop only in big historical regions. Thus, the creation of big regions was seen as an indispensable element of the stimulation of the development of the country through the development of its regions as civil society communities. Therefore several of the proponents of the reforms suggested openly the need of assisting the development of regional identities in newly designed regions or even their construction in the absence of such. Regions were also assessed by the experts on the basis of the strength of their regional identity. The regions with lowest levels of identity were usually seen as those having low development potential.

Other elements of criticism of the reform were also refuted by its supporters. For example, the suggestion that cities losing their status of regional capitals will fall into decline has been considered as unjustified in the condition of the free-market economy. While in the centrally planned, socialist system of central redistribution such arguments may have been valid, in the post-Communist era economic development of the cities or regions will no longer be dependent on the central state redistribution, argued the liberals.

In general, one could notice a clear linkage between the attitude towards regional reform and the view on the role of the state in the economy. While supporters of the reform tended to marginalise the role of the state in most of the areas of its activity, the critics of reform still considered it a major player in social and economic life. Thus, reduction of the number of regions and in particular of regional capitals was seen as depriving inhabitants of the peripheries direct access to state institutions and thus to the state subsidies.

When finally the White Paper of the reform based on the 12-regions model was submitted to the parliament by the government, the opposition (at that time mainly the post-Communist Social-Democrats, SLD) was able to interfere, which also gave room for the president to enter the legislation procedure through the presidential veto. The Social-Democrats demanded the creation of at least 17 regions, in a way suggesting the need for the return to the pre-1975 system. President Kwaśniewski and the opposition presented themselves as the defenders of the rights of the population of the regions not envisaged in the governmental project. In this

way, they have considerably reinforced the movements against the liquidation of the smaller regions.

In the effect of a compromise reached between the opposition and the government, 16 administrative regions were finally created. One may add that president Kwaśniewski has clearly profited from his involvement in the “defence” of the “endangered” voivodships in the presidential election of 2000. Although his re-election was nearly certain in any case, he has enjoyed a considerable increase in the number of his voters in the regions he helped to “save”.<sup>4</sup> Among them there were the following voivodships: Świętokrzyskie (capital city in Kielce), Lubuskie (two capital cities: Zielona Góra and Gorzów<sup>5</sup>) and Opolskie (Opole). The Kujawsko-Pomorskie (with capitals in Toruń and Bydgoszcz) was an unclear case which was the only case in which the government was ready to accept the compromise and declare it the 13<sup>th</sup> voivodship.

The debate over regional reform has been summarised in Figure 3 in which different projects are imposed on the two-dimensional structure of the Polish political scene discussed earlier. As it becomes obvious, the rural-urban axis appears to be the main line along which the attitudes towards the reform are differentiated. On one side we find the most ardent supporters of regionalisation based on the large regions model in the liberal-urban camp. On the other, the supporters of the old system of 49 voivodships in the Peasant Party.

### **Is a Hole in the Bridge a Political Issue or Not ? – Debate over Politicisation of Local Elections**

Another interesting debate induced by the introduction of the regional reform is the still ongoing dispute over the politicisation of the local democracy. On one side we find the proponents of the measures, in particular the electoral laws, stimulating the partisan nature of local elite selection and local socio-political life in general. At the time of 1998 elections which constituted a major step towards the politicisation of local democracy, the process was supported by the majority of politicians from SLD, AWS and UW. As they argued, only parties can guarantee the continuity in the local politics, thus making politicians accountable and preventing the access to the local politics for accidental groups of careerists. They also see it as a necessary effect or condition of the widely expected and desirable consolidation of the Polish political scene. On the other hand, “politicisation” has been criticised by representatives of the Peasant Party (PSL), Labor Union (UP) and the Polish Family (RP).



The dispute has both very clear pragmatic and ideological dimensions. On one hand there is a very clear tendency for politicians from parties currently or potentially profiting from the politicisation (especially strong parties) to support this process. On the other hand, the dispute has a dimension which can be considered a reflection over the nature and limits of politics. On one hand, we deal with the view that every aspect of social life at all its levels is part of broadly defined politics. If everything is political, all local issues are also political and must be dealt with by politicians. On the other hand, we have a camp arguing for an opposite view – a very clear border between the realm of politics and non-political field of pragmatic issues. Thus, as proponents of this view argue, local democracy, as many other spheres of social life, should not be governed by the laws of national politics. In some cases one can notice in such a view overtones of aversion towards Warsaw as the “spoiled” political centre of the country and the perception of national politics done in Warsaw as “dirty” and political parties as corrupt almost by their nature.

Romaszewski (2002), one of the critiques of the politicisation of local democracy, in his recent article has put the issue in the form of a rhetorical question: “After all, isn’t a proverbial hole in the bridge neither a left nor right issue, and those active in the self-government should have qualities of social activists rather than politicians?”. The non-partisan social activists (*społecznicy*), “active people, social activists, those who would like to take the responsibility for the country and not willing to make party carriers and be subordinated to the party discipline” are crucial to Romaszewski’s argument, as he sees them as a major asset of the local communities. As he writes “the self-government is becoming increasingly partisan in big communes and counties, a wide group of local social activists excluding from its ranks, and in small gminas transforming them into the clients of party representatives”.

One can also notice another aspect of this debate, namely the fear that the politicisation of the regional and local life will instead of genuine regionalisation lead to the nationalisation of regional and local political life. In other words, national political issues may squeeze out the regional and local issues in places where they should dominate which would lead to unjustified ideologisation of regional and local politics.

### **Paradoxes of Regionalisation of Polish Political Life**

As stressed earlier, the regional dimension of Polish political life is largely paradoxical. One of its most obvious paradoxes is the coexistence of deep regional differentiations – such as those in political behaviour described

above or new administrative division of the country with a relatively low level of regional identity and in particular its restricted expression in the political field.

In general, the average level of the regional identity in Poland is considerably lower than the European average and that of the national identity in Poland which is very high and lower than the average level of the local identity. According to Jałowiecki and Szczepański (2001) the highest level of local identity is to be found in Wielkopolskie voivodship (Greater Poland), while the weakest in the Zachodniopomorskie (Western Pomerania). On the other hand, the highest level of regional identity is to be found in the Małopolskie voivodship (Little Poland) and the lowest level in the Świętokrzyskie voivodship. Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Małopolskie are special in one respect — namely that they have higher level of the regional than local identity. Świętokrzyskie is also special in the sense that it displays the lowest level of the national identity. Table 3 presents a summary of the recent study by Jałowiecki and Szczepański (2001) on the regional identity in the new regions.

The above mentioned figures are, of course, not fully representative, especially taking into account the fact that the meaning of the word “region” was not clearly defined and the survey was carried out just after the introduction of the new administrative division so many of the respondents could not even be fully aware to which voivodship they belong.

Another issue, which I will just briefly note here, is the fact that individual level attitudes which are reflected in the above statistics rarely translate into the indicators of the intensity of the group level social and political activities. The latter are to a large extent, dependent on such factors as institutional setting and activity of the regional elites. Thus, at it seems from this point of view, the regions of the highest activity of the regional movements are Upper Silesia, Wielkopolska (Greater Poland), Podhale (mountain region south of Kraków) and Kaszuby (part of the Western Pomerania south-west of Gdańsk). The regional movements in these areas were given a considerable impetus just after the fall of Communism. In the beginning of the 1990s several organisations were established and many of them participated in the first fully democratic general elections of 1991. Only a few of them like the Movement for Autonomy of Silesia or Union of Greater Poles (Unia Wielkopolan) managed to get individual deputies. The initial enthusiasm of the regional movements was considerably weakened not only by the relatively low level of popular support. One crucial factor restricting the possibilities of regionalisation of the political life of the country was the introduction of



the 5% threshold of votes for parties taking part in the general elections.<sup>6</sup> The coalition threshold was set up at 7% and only ethnic minorities were granted an exemption. In practice, only the German Minority in Opole Silesia profits from the latter. In contrast, the threshold appeared to block the access to parliament to most of the regional movements which cannot hope to reach the level of 5% support in the nationwide scale.

Another important trait of many of the Polish regionalisms is their strong institutional character. In other words we deal with a strong inertia of administrative structures, the existence of which is quite often based on the activity of a small administrative elite dependent upon personal interests in maintaining the regional centre rather than deep regional identity. Some example of this paradox could be observed in the effects of the regional reform of 1998. One of the strongest outcomes of this reform was the creation of the new "Silesian voivodship", the borders of which do not have any resemblance to the traditional borders of Silesia. The new region comprises only part of historical Silesia and includes several areas of completely different traditions like Zagłębie Dąbrowskie or Częstochowa region<sup>7</sup>. Zagłębie despite the deep cultural rift with Silesia was already part of the previous "Katowickie voivodship" thus we deal here with the classic case of institutional inertia. At the same time, Silesia is widely considered to be the region with strongest level of regional identity and traditions in the country.

To understand better such paradoxical effects of the reform one could look closely at the fascinating phenomenon of the so-called "movements for the defence of the old voivodships" which were created in several regions during the period of discussions on the administrative reform. As Jałowiecki, who studied selected movements suggests, most of them were restricted to the capitals of the regions. The only exception in this respect was the region of Opole. The same thesis is advanced by Gorzelak (2001), who maintains that "the inhabitants of the villages and small towns, scattered in the region, in fact did not care much to which administrative region their locality belonged. The local elites in the capital cities which were endangered by the possibility of losing the voivodship status tried, however, to create the impression that they are widely supported by the public, and sometimes were able to create such artifacts like results of public surveys conducted through the local press or radio, rallies in the front of town halls, manifestations in Warsaw etc."

As Jałowiecki and Gorzelak suggest, what was at stake in the given debate were first of all the jobs of the institutional elite in the "old" capital cities. They also agree that regional/local entrepreneurs having contacts with local authorities (profitable state orders etc.) could be very much

interested in maintaining the old regional structures. These persons were also able to provide finances for the protest campaigns, which in many cases have quite an intensive character and succeeded in attracting considerable media interest, and finally in four cases proved to be successful in its main goal. On the other hand however, Jałowiecki and Hryniewicz (1997) were earlier very sceptical as far as the quality of the regional elites in Poland was concerned. As their research proved, elites of the old voivodships were small, quite often based on the close friendships or even family relationships and it would be usually wrong to identify their activity with manifestations of deeper, grass-roots regional identities. Thus, in most cases, it is difficult to talk about the development of the genuine regional elites in most of the Polish regions.

These are just a few of the paradoxes of the regionalisation of Polish political life, which in some aspects may seem already quite advanced, but in many others, appears to be just beginning or even having an opposite direction. The coming years will show which of these contradictory tendencies will prevail as the new administrative division of the country is taking its roots.

## Appendices

**Table 1. Factor analysis results of the 1998 Elections**  
Cases are votes for major candidates in the first round of election in communities (gminy). Rotation: varimax

	<i>Factor loadings</i>	
	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>
SLD	-,700	,492
AWS	,875	,08
Ojczyzna	,261	0,024
Rodzina Polska	,379	,311
Przymierze Społeczne	-,339	-,867
UW	-,135	,675
Explained variance	27,3	25,2
Cummulated	52,6	



**Table 2. Factor analysis results of the 2001 parliamentary elections.**  
**Cases are votes for major candidates in the first round of election in communes (gminy).**  
**Rotation: varimax**

	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>
SLD-UP	,446	–,784
AWSP	,234	,555
LRP	–0,04	,776
PiS	,539	,542
PSL	–,821	,180
PO	,714	,253
UW	,626	–,109
Samoobrona	–,722	–,140
Explained variance	33,2	24,1
Cummulated		57,3

**Table 3. Level of national, regional and local identity in the new voivodships.**  
**(% of respondents identifying with a given level)**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Local</i>	<i>Regional</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>European</i>
Polish average	77	73	88	64
Dolnośląskie	84	78	89	78
Kujawsko-pomorskie	73	64	91	70
Lubelskie	72	67	87	67
Lubuskie	76	64	89	63
Łódzkie	84	73	92	66
Małopolskie	83	84	88	55
Mazowieckie	83	72	91	62
Opolskie	76	71	81	47
Podkarpackie	84	79	90	68
Podlaskie	79	79	88	63
Pomorskie	84	76	82	62
Śląskie	72	70	85	64
Świętokrzyskie	69	61	77	57
Warmińsko-mazurskie	70	78	87	74
Wielkopolskie	86	72	90	56
Zachodniopomorskie	57	67	98	76

Source: Jałowiecki, Szczepański (2001)

## Notes

- 1 I presented this approach in a more detailed way in (Zarycki, 2000).
- 2 Its legal dimension has been summarised in Polish by Tucholska (1999).
- 3 Interestingly one could notice that the above mentioned “vacuum in the East” can be linked with the split of the old historical regions by the post-1945 borders. Olsztyn is clearly a Polish substitute for Königsberg (Polish — *Królewiec*, Russian — *Kaliningrad*) cut off the southern part of the former Eastern Prussia, Białystok is filling the vacuum created by separating the North-Eastern Poland from its previous regional capital in Vilnius (Polish —

*Wilno*), while Rzeszów is filling the void created by separation of the Polish part of Eastern Galicja from its former capital in L'viv (Polish — *Lwów*, Russian — *Lvov*, German — *Lemberg*).

- 4 See Zarycki (1999) for more details.
- 5 One of the capitals became the seat of the regional parliament, while the other the seat of the voivode (the representative of the government in the region). The idea of dividing the capitals between two cities in two of the new regions illustrates the thesis that the number of capital cities was even more important than the number of the regions.
- 6 One of the main reasons for introduction of the 5% threshold was the fact that in 1991 general election candidates for deputies represented over 100 organisations while those elected belonged to over 30 parties or movements. A wide consensus emerged that such fragmentation of the parliament should not be possible in the future.
- 7 For more on this issue see the paper by Marek Szczepanski in this volume.

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## Afterword





## On the Attitudes Towards the Regionalisation of Poland

Tomasz Zarycki

The subject of this volume — regionalisation of Polish politics in the 1990s is one of the most important and, at the same time, one of the most successful aspects of the Polish post-Communist transformation. With the 1998 reorganisation of the administrative and regional organisation of the state the Polish regional reform became one of the most courageous and revolutionary in post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe. Among its numerous fascinating aspects, it seems to be an intriguing illustration of the depth of evolution of the nature of Polish society and politics in the second part of the twentieth century. Let me remind readers that Communist Poland – the People’s Republic of Poland or “PRL”, as it is widely recognised, could be considered a relatively successful attempt at the construction of a first Polish modern nation state. Despite its dependence on the Soviet Union and the dominant role of the Communist rhetoric, a specific version of Polish culture was imposed on the whole population of the country. At the same time, most dimensions of the social and political life of the country become centrally designed and controlled. Earlier, the war and post-war movements of people on an unprecedented scale, contributed to the ethnic homogenisation of the country. This process had a very clear regional dimension. Regional cultures, dialects, histories and other aspects of sub-national identities were successfully marginalised and, in many cases, annihilated. The former German “Western and Northern Territories” of Poland are the best example of the construction of the new culturally homogenised communities which could only be theoretically called “regional”. Although distant from Warsaw, they had almost no specific regional identity. In addition, the totalitarian nature of the political system of the country prevented the possibility of existence of any form of regional and local self-government.

It appears that the construction of the first Polish nation state in the form of PRL could be considered a result of the trade-off between the



non-Communist Poles resisting Soviet domination and Moscow. Although in 1945 the country was losing its independence, it was offered help in the construction of the modern nation-state project long dreamed of by many Poles, particularly those of the national-democratic orientation, symbolised by the figure of Dmowski. Thus, while Communists were offering the Polish left the programme of social reforms – construction of the “socialist society” at the same time they were challenging the right to construct the homogenous Polish nation state. Both of the projects could not be achieved by any means by the pre-war Second Polish Republic and could be seen as “compensation” for Soviet domination of Poland. In addition, the movement of the Western border and the taking over of a considerable amount of territory from pre-war Germany, were also among the long-time unrealistic dreams of the National-Democrats. These “achievements” of Communist Poland were undoubtedly important arguments in the hands of the Soviet leaders, who helped to incorporate successfully Poland into their empire and retain control over Polish society for several decades. Communist propaganda reminded the Poles of this directly or indirectly until the last days of its existence.

Consequently, the collapse of the Communist system could be seen as a blow for the Polish nation state project. The fact that its weakening was not widely deplored in 1990 seems to be a result of several factors. They include both the strength of the Polish anti-Soviet (Russian) and anti-Communist sentiments, the post-modern crisis of the nation-state project and deep evolution of the Polish political elites and political scene. In fact, the discontinuity between pre-war and post-Communist politics in Poland was even greater than in Czechoslovakia or Hungary.

Although the post-Communist regional reforms in Poland, including the self-government reform of 1990 and the regional reform of the 1998 were widely criticised both for their restricted character, timing and implementation, I would argue that their importance is in fact most often underestimated, especially given the above mentioned historical context. One of the examples of the political and cultural shocks accompanying the decomposition of the Communist nation-state was the “emergence” of the German minority in the Opole region. The discovery of the importance of the heritage of the nineteenth century partitions for the electoral geography of the country and development of several regional movements was among other “regional” surprises of the early 1990s. None of them however, was seen as an argument for restricting the policy of decentralisation of the state. This seems to be one of the greatest successes of the Polish transformation. The ideas of restoration of the self-government, revival of regional and local identities and regionalisation of politics are

still considered as essential elements of the programme of democratisation and modernisation of the country and are shared by most of the political parties. As I would argue, the reasons for such developments are not entirely obvious. Besides the general enthusiasm for a democratic project and support for the civil society idea seen as integral requirements of the programme of “catching up” with the West, one can point out to the dominating conviction that Poland is strong enough culturally to resist regional centrifugal political and social forces which do not have to be restricted institutionally. This argument may be supported by the observation that the regionalisation of Polish political life is, in practice, rather slow and politics on all levels remains dominated by national political cleavages. This may testify to the fact that the homogenisation of Polish society, including its regional dimension, has the lasting effect of the Communist state and is not perceived as being a danger. On the other hand, the very idea of nation-state may have lost its attractiveness for many Poles as has happened in many Western societies. These are only some of the many possible factors behind the dominating attitudes towards the regionalisation in contemporary Poland. It seems however, that much is still to be done to reveal the full complexity and historical context of the support for this process. The papers presented in this volume bring a closer understanding of the development and roots of the dismantling of the Communist nation state in the regional dimension. Nevertheless, the future of regionalisation of the Polish politics is still not determined and, I would argue, positive attitudes towards decentralisation among Poles should not be taken for granted. Already the 1998 reform had its strong critics, accusing the reformers of the dismantling of the Polish unitary state infrastructure. The future, especially in the context of the integration with the Western political and economic structures, may bring further changes in attitudes towards this historical process.









